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ABSTRACT

A descriptive grammar of Ewondo, a Northwest Bantu language spoken in southern Cameroon, Africa is presented. Ewondo is a dialect cluster which is part of a larger dialect cluster usually called Yaunde-Fang. The variety of Ewondo presented is based on the speech of a single individual, who comes from Yaounde-Eturi. Occasional references to other dialects are included. Contents of the grammar are as follows: symbols, phonology, stem and word formation, noun classes, noun formation, modifier nouns, pronouns, verbs, stem extensions, auxiliary verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjuctions, sentence types, relative clauses, coordination, and if-clauses. Some exercises, a dictionary, and a brief bibliography are included. (SW)

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Number 4

A DESCRIPTIVE GRAMMAR OF EWONDO

James E. Redden

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PREFACE

Northwest Bantu languages contain many features and complexities because of contraction and elision that set them off from the rest of Bantu. Stems and affixes are often shortened and even fused. Their tone structure in many ways is much more like that of the non-Bantu languages to the west than the Bantu languages to the south. For these and similar reasons, I decided to try to learn one Northwest Bantu language as well as I could as a base for studying the whole group. Thanks to this USOE grant, I have been privileged to work on Ewondo.

The project has unfortunately been delayed by many difficulties. When I applied to USOE for the grant, I asked the Cultural Affairs Office at the American Embassy in Yaoundé to start looking around for a native speaker of Ewondo who could also be a student at my university. Such a native speaker was found but for various reasons was not able to obtain a passport. Five months of a supposed fifteen-month project elapsed, and I still had no native speaker. Desperate attempts to locate an Ewondo speaker in the United States and to get another speaker from Cameroon came to nothing. Realizing that many French-speaking Africans attended universities in Quebec, I telephoned Professor David Sankoff at the University of Montreal. He graciously agreed to try to find an Ewondo speaker in Montreal. Within a week he had found four. The USOE granted me permission to spend a month in Montreal working with them. However, none of them could come to SIU-C to assist me with my study of Ewondo because of restrictions on their scholarship funding by their government. Nevertheless, through them I located Mr. Antoine Ntsimi (or Ntsimi Antoine, as they say in Cameroon) at the University of Ottawa, and he wished to come to Carbondale. Seven months after the project started, I finally had an informant. I also had another informant for a few weeks before she left to get married.

I am exceedingly grateful to the United States Office of Education for giving me extended time to complete this work.

I am likewise grateful to Antoine Ntsimi for all his patient help and many native-speaker insights. He graciously agreed on many occasions to work late into the night and on weekends. Also, as he learned what I was trying to do in my analysis, he was able to give me many penetrating insights into Ewondo. He is without doubt the best language informant out of over fifty that I have worked with over the past twenty-plus years.

I am also grateful to Professor David Sankoff for his excellent and very quick assistance in helping me locate Ewondo speakers in Quebec.

I am likewise grateful to the Department of Linguistics, the College of Liberal Arts, and the Office of Research Development and Administration at Southern Illinois University for released time to work on Ewondo, for typing support, and for additional funds to support Mr. Ntsimi after the USOE grant expired.

Last, and by no means least, I am grateful to my wife and family for permitting me to withdraw from family life for the last year and a half. Teaching full time at the university and working many, many hours per week on Ewondo left me little time for anything else.

James E. Redden
Carbondale, Illinois
August, 1979

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INTRODUCTION

0. Ewondo is a Northwest Bantu language spoken in southern Cameroon. It is a member of the A.70 Yaunde-Fang Group in the revised Guthrie Classification and is numbered A.72a in this classification.[1] There are some 100-200,000 native speakers of Ewondo.

As in much of Africa, it is difficult to distinguish *language* and *dialect* in Cameroon for a variety of sociological, political, and religious reasons. Ewondo is a dialect cluster which is part of a larger dialect cluster usually called Yaunde-Fang. There are differing degrees of comprenension between the various dialects --- in many cases close to complete comprehension, in some cases only partial or little intelligibility, and even one-way intelligibility. Speakers of the various dialects often assiduously maintain that the dialects are distinct languages, pointing out numerous differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammatical structure. The differences in orthography lend credence to the feeling that the dialects are different languages. The Ewondo were evangelized by Roman Catholic missions; and the Bulu, by Presbyterian missions. Since each group developed an orthography for its own use, the differences in writing further contributed to the idea that these were different languages. Ewondo and Bulu are the two major dialect clusters of the Yaunde-Fang group; and since they have been used for evangelization and literature. they seem to be absorbing the other dialect clusters.[2]

The name, Ewondo, is formed on the same stem as *owondo*, *groundnut*, *peanut*, and reflects a major agricultural practice of the Ewondo. The Ewondo call themselves *Beti*, which means *masters*, *lords*, and is a clue to the fact that the Beti were politically dominant before the advent of the Europeans. However, other groups than the Ewondo were included in the Beti.

Since independence, large numbers of people have been pouring into Yaoundé for economic and cultural reasons. These include speakers of many varieties of Ewondo and of many other dialects of the Yaunde-Fang dialect cluster. There has been a considerable amount of dialect leveling, especially among the young people growing up in Yaoundé.

Many other people speaking languages of other branches of Northwest Bantu and of Bantoid (Extended Bantu) and non-Bantu groups have also come into Yaoundé in large numbers since independence. Many of these have learned Ewondo with varying degrees of proficiency. Also, to the north and northeast of Yaoundé, there is a pidgin based on the Yaunde-Fang cluster called by various names such as "ewondo populaire" and "bulu des chauffeurs", which can also be heard in Yaoundé.

The variety of Ewondo presented in this grammar is based on the speech of a single individual, Mr. Antoine Ntsimi, who comes from Yaoundé-Eturi, which is some two miles south of the center of Yaoundé (Yaoundé-ville). Generalizing for all speakers of the language from the speech of one individual cannot of course be done. Five other speakers of Ewondo assisted the writer for short periods of time, and each spoke a different dialect of Ewondo than Mr. Ntsimi. Also, Mr. Ntsimi is consciously aware of the influence on his own speech from that of his parents, who come from different dialect areas (father, Yaoundé-Eturi; mother, Yaoundé-ville). Likewise, the Ewondo of Mr. Ntsimi is different from that published in the literature on Ewondo. Since the writer had no alternative but to describe the variety of Ewondo used by the speaker available to him for an extended period, it is presented here as a native-speaker model with only occasional data from other dialects of Ewondo.

Six other native speakers of Ewondo were used besides Mr. Ntsimi, but for much shorter periods of time. None of the seven informants spoke the same dialect. Two of the speakers spoke dialects quite divergent from the Ewondo considered Ewondo proper, Mvelé and Eton. No data from these two dialects are included in this grammar. Occasional references to the dialects of the other four are given at various places in this grammar. None of the seven speakers consulted spoke the dialects given in the Nekes, Abéga, or Angenot studies. In fact, not only did each of the seven speakers disagree on many points with these three studies, they disagreed very much with one another as to what forms constitute Ewondo, especially in verbs and tone structures. Forms elicited from one informant or taken from one of the three studies mentioned above were often and regularly denied as being Ewondo at all or were said to be from some other dialect--Eton, Mvele, Bula, or something else. Because of this and because of the divergence in forms elicited from the various native speakers, it is apparent to the writer that the dialect diversity in Ewondo is rather large. The writer hopes to spend his next sabbatical in Yaoundé in order to have prolonged exposure to the various varieties of Ewondo in order to revise and expand this preliminary grammar of Ewondo. Data, suggestions, and criticisms on the analysis and description given herein would be most welcome.

Extensive use has been made of the Nekes, Abéga, and Angenot studies on Ewondo. Every table in these three works has been replicated with Mr. Ntsimi and at least one other native speaker. However, in no case were the tables the same except the one on the vocative. There are usually many differences in the tones, a number of differences in vowels, and other differences. Because of this and because of the differences in analysis and the resultant description and transcription, none of the tables are listed as coming from another study. Many of the tables given herein have of course appeared nowhere else. Many of the differences are obviously quite regular; but since the writer has not had opportunity to work extensively with more than one informant, it is not possible for him to state these regularities until after fieldwork in Cameroon, hopefully on his next sabbatical.

SYMBOLS

Most of the letters used herein have values very similar to that which they have in English and French, and therefore require no further explanation. Those letters that don't occur in English or French or have different values in Ewondo will be expalined. Also, special linguistics symbols will be explained.

ŋ	velar nasal similar to "ng" in English *sing*
Ŋ	capital of ŋ
ɲ	palatal nasal similar to "ny" in English or "gn" in French
Ɲ	capital of ɲ
ts	a single unit of "t" and "s" at the beginning of a syllable
dz	a single unit of "d" and "z" at the beginning of a syllable
kp	a single unit of "k" and "p" at the beginning of a syllable
gb	a single unit of "g" and "b" at the beginning of a syllable
e	similar to vowel in English *face* or *bait*
ɛ	similar to the vowel in English *less* or *bet*
o	similar to vowel in English *loaf* or *note*
ɔ	similar to vowel in English *loss* or *sought*
ə	similar to vowel in English *bus* or *nut*
i	similar to vowel in English *cease* or *seat*
u	similar to vowel in English *noose* or *suit*
ɑ	similar to vowel in English *father* or *rot*
č	like "ch" in English *church*
ɦ	similar to "h" in English *behave*
ç	voiceless "y", similar to "ch" in German *ich*
ɨ	similar to vowel in American *just* when said fast and with weak stress
ɹ	flapped "r" like "t" in American *water* or "r" in British *very*
r̥	voiceless "r" similar to "sh" in English *she*, but with tongue further back

ɱ	simultaneous "m" and "ŋ"
ʔ	glottal stop, like "t" in American *button*
/ /	sounds between slashes are phonemic, i.e. distinguish meanings
[ ]	sounds between square brackets are phonetic , i.e. don't
^	vowel made with hump of tongue higher in the mouth
˘	vowel made with hump of tongue lower in mouth
#	end of sentence, like period
|	sentence-internal pause, like comma
+	potential pause bewteen syllables at slow speed

PHONOLOGY

1. Ewondo has 33 phonemes: 27 segmentals and 6 suprasegmentals. Segmentals are divided into 20 consonants and seven vowels; suprasegmentals are divided into 3 tones and 3 junctures.

1.1.1. There are 2 kinds of consonants: stops and continuants; but voiced stops do have fricative or flap allophones in some morpheme-non-initial positions. There are two types of continuants: nasal and oral. Oral continuants are fricatives, semivowels, and a lateral. Consonants occur in 4 positions: labial, alveolar, palatal, and velar.

Stops occur in 3 positions: bilabial, alveolar, and velar, for 9 phonemes. Double closure obtains in the 2 labiovelars /kp/ and /gb/. Fricatives occur in 2 positions, labiodental and alveolar, for 4 phonemes. Nasals occur in 4 positions, bilabial, alveolar, palatal, and velar, for 4 phonemes. The lateral is alveolar. Semivowels occur in 2 positions, bilabial and palatal, for 2 phonemes. The opposition voiced vs. voiceless obtains in the stops and fricatives, but this opposition does not occur with /b/ since /p/ occurs only in an expanded form of Ewondo in loanwords in acculturated speech. The opposition affricated vs. unaffricated obtains in the alveolar stops; but all phonemes are affricated before close vowels, especially /i/. Thus, phonemic groove affrication in /tsi/, [tsi], differs from non-phonemic slit affrication in /ti/, [tçɪ] (i.e., [t plus voiceless y] before /i/). The consonants may be diagrammed as below.

		labials	alveolars		palatals	velars	labiovelars
stops	vl.		t	ts		k	kp
	vd.	b	d	dz		g	gb
fricatives	vl.	f	s				
	vd.	v	z				
nasals		m	n		ɲ	ŋ	
lateral			l				
semivowels		w			y		

1.1.2. Vowels occur at 3 levels: high, mid, and low. There is a front-back contrast at all 3 levels, but a front-central-back contrast at only the 2 lower levels. There are, then, 8 vowels. Vowels length is phonemic; but since there are numerous vowel clusters, long vowels are considered clusters of the same vowel. The vowels may be diagrammed as below.[3]

	front	central	back
high	i		u
mid	e	ə	o
low	ɛ	ɑ	ɔ

1.1.3. There are 3 tone phonemes: high /´/, mid /¯/, and low /`/. Low is not marked except on syllabic nasals, in order to distinguish initial syllabic nasal plus consonant from initial clusters of nasal plus consonant. All vowels and syllabic nasals have tone, but syllabic nasals lose their tone after a vowel. The tone of a vowel, except on /ə/ or a low following a high and preceding another low, is not lost when the vowel is elided. The morphophonemic influence of the elided vowel will be seen on the adjacent vowel, nearly always the following vowel.

1.1.4. There are 3 juncture phonemes: final /#/, series or non-final /|/, and plus /+/. In texts, /#/ is /./, and /|/ is /,/. /+/ is open transition or syllabic boundary. Any sequence of phonemes that can be both preceded and followed by a juncture other than /+/ is a word, but a word may also be preceded or followed by /+/ or by no juncture.

1.2. There are quite a few restrictions on the occurrence of single consonants. All consonants except /g/ occur word initially, and all consonants except /ŋ/ occur radical initially.[4] All consonants occur medially in a word, but only the voiced consonants except /v, dz, gb, ɲ/ occur medially in a radical. In a reduplicated or compounded stem, all consonants occur medially. In word-final position, there is no contrast between voiced and voiceless consonants. All final consonants are voiced at the beginning but rapidly devoice during the last half of their length. This is clearly shown on spectograms.[5] Since there is no voiced-voiceless contrast in final position, final consonants could be analyzed as belonging to either series. Speakers of English usually hear final stops as voiceless because they usually have a fortes release, i.e. non-phonemic aspiration. After having heard Ewondo for several months, the writer hears final consonants except /s/ as voiced. Since this also appears to be native-speaker reaction, final consonants except /s/ are analyzed as voiced in this grammar.[6] Final consonants are /b, d, g, l, m, n, ŋ, s/. Word-final /l/ is nearly always dropped in sentence-final position, but final /l/ tends to remain in words when quoted in isolation.

The syllable types are V, CV, CVC, CCV, and CCVC. V are vowels or syllabic nasals. CC are homorganic nasals plus stops. Such CC clusters are not prenasalized stop phonemes contrasting with other stops because the nasals separate from the stops and become part of the preceding syllable if preceded by a vowel. Clusters in loanwords are broken up by the insertion of vowels, e.g. /fuláwa/, *flower*, borrowed from English.

1.3. Some of the phonemes set up above could be interpreted differently. The initial clusters of homorganic nasal plus stop do contrast with homorganic syllabic nasal plus stop, e.g. /ŋgá(l)/, *gun, rifle*, and /ŋ̀gá(l)/, *wife, woman*. However, as noted above, there is no need set these up as separate phonemes since they are clusters and the nasal breaks off and becomes part of the preceding syllable if preceded by a vowel, e.g. /ŋ̀kús/, *widow*, /mìŋkús/, *widows*. Also, this saves setting up six additional phonemes for the initial clusters /mb, nd, ndz, ŋg, mgb, mv/.

1.3.1. /ts, dz, kp, gb/ could be considered as clusters of two phonemes each; however, none of these four can be broken apart at a syllable boundary. A syllable boundary always precedes them. Since Ewondo breaks up clusters at syllable boundaries in both native and borrowed words, these 6 must be considered single phonemes.

1.3.2. Since /ɲ/ does not occur in radical-final or sentence-final position, one might be inclined to think it is a cluster /ny/; but phonetically it is an [ɲ]. It patterns just like the other nasals in initial positions. If one considers /ɲ̀ɲiá/, *mother*, to be /ǹynyiá/, then not only are the phonetic facts strained; but one also has to set up two new cluster types: initial syllabic CC and radical-initial CC after syllable boundary. Since these would both be *ad hoc* and very un-Ewondo, /ɲ/ must be considered a phoneme.

1.3.3. Since /v/ has the allophone [ɦ], which, for many speakers including the informant used for this study, is about as frequent in occurrence as [v], and perhaps even more frequent than [v], one might ask either why /v/ and /h/ were not set up as separated phonemes or why /h/ was not chosen to represent the phoneme. Since [v] and [ɦ] never contrast, they are variants of the same phoneme. After /m/, only [v] occurs, as in /mvú/, *dog*; but in other positions, they seem to vary freely, as in /vé/, *give*, [vé] or [ɦé]. If /h/ were considered the main allophone representative of the phoneme, one would have to add an additional column and the additional feature *glottal* to the phoneme chart. For these reasons, /v/ was chosen to represent the phoneme.

1.3.4. The voiced stops /b, d, g/ have fricative or flap allophones in radical-final positions if not utterance final. /b/ is occasionally /β/ in this position; and /g/, occasionally /γ/. /d/ is usually [ɹ], i.e., a voiced flap, in this position, e.g. /kádá/, [káɹá], *crabb*, /mòd tè/, [mòɹ(ə)tè], *that man*; but /d/ in utterance-final position might be (1.) [d], a devoicing stop (see 1.2.), (2.) [r̥], a voiceless fricative "r", i.e. a post-palatal [š], (3.) or occasionally [ɹ], a voiced flap. It would usually be [d̥] utterance-finally. Before a voiceless stop, /d/ is sometimes [r̥], as in /mòd tè/. But in radical-initial position /d/ is always [d] even in words where it is not in stem-initial position. For example, the /d/ in /dí/, *eat*, would be [d] in /màkədí/, *I'm on my way to eat*. Before itself, /d/ is usually a voiced flap but may be [r̥], e.g. /màkàddí/, [màkàɹdí], or [màkàr̥dí], *I usually eat*.

Stops, especially voiceless stops, usually have a fortes release, i.e. non-phonemic aspiration. On a spectogram, this appears as a sharply beginning and terminating spike with loud random noise from about 2,000 c.p.s. to over 8,500 c.p.s. (i.e. off the spectogram). Some spikes show mellowness, i.e. formants. These spikes also often occur after fricatives.

1.3.5. /y/ and /w/ could be considered as non-syllabic allophones of /i/ and /u/ respectively in the environment before another vowel; but if this were done, it would make it necessary to set up phonemic triphthongs just to account for this type of syllable structure. Since this would be *ad hoc* and since /y/ and /w/ pattern like consonants in general, they are set up herein as consonants.

1.3.6. Before /kp/ and /gb/, the homorganic labiovelar nasal is [ŋ͡m]. This [ŋ͡m] could be assigned to either /m/ or /ŋ/ since there is no possibility of an /m/ vs. /ŋ/ contrast before the labiovelar stops. Assignment of [ŋ͡m] to either phoneme has to be arbitrary for this reason. It is assigned to /m/ in this grammar since it is written "m" in the orthography.

1.3.7. The phone [?], glottal stop, alternates with zero before initial vowels. Consequently, [?] is not phonemic since its presence or absence makes no difference.

1.3.8. Consonants from other languages having no close counterpart in Ewondo are readily assimilated to the Ewondo phonological system. Initially "p" becomes /f/, as in /fíla/, *pillow*. In acculturated speech, /p/ could be considered a phoneme of Expanded Ewondo, e.g. /prezidén/, *president*; but existing alongside this is the assimilated form /félézídén/. Finally "p" is interpreted as a devoicing /b/, the usual allophone of /b/ in this position, e.g. /ikíb/, [ikib̥] (from French *equipe*), *team*. Finally after a nasal, "p" is dropped since a final cluster of homorganic nasal plus stop does not occur, e.g. /fóm/, *pump*. If followed by a vowel the assimilated form, "p" becomes /b/, as in /alámba/, *lamp*.

Initially "č" becomes /ts/, and finally, /s/, e.g. /tsɔ́s/, *church*, /tsén/, *chain*, and /wɔ́s/, *watch*.

In initial clusters, "r" usually becomes /l/, e.g. /kəlísən/, *Christian*, and /kolós/, *cross*; but /tidág/, [tiɹág], *truck*, does occur. In non-initial clusters, it is dropped, as in /fuláwa/, *flower*, /kábínda/, *carpenter*, and /mákíd/, *market*.

Both consonants in a cluster with "l" remain, but a vowel is inserted, breaking the consonant cluster into two syllables, e.g. /bulúm/, *blue*, and /mílíg/, *canned milk*.

1.4. The 7 Ewondo vowels have a very high center of articulation. The tongue position for /i/ and /u/ is so high, i.e. close to the top of the mouth, that loud friction usually occurs with these vowels, especially with /i/. This friction causes the preceding consonant to be affricated. This non-phonemic affrication is about twice as long as the fortes release or non-phonemic aspiration of stops, but only about half as long as the affrication of /ts/ and /dz/. Both the non-phonemic and phonemic affrication display mellowness.[7]

Because the center of articulation is much higher in Ewondo than in English, speakers of English tend to hear Ewondo /e/ as /i/, /ɛ/ as /e/, /a/ as /ə/, /ɔ/ as /o/, and /o/ as /u/; and speakers of Ewondo likewise tend to hear English vowels one position lower and perhaps one position further back, e.g. the first vowel in /tɛ́la/, *tailor*.

Linguists will hear most occurrences of Ewondo /ə/ as [ɨ], but [ɨ] and [ə^] are both allophones of /ə/; whereas [əˇ] is an allophone of /a/.

1.4.1. It would be possible to set up vowel length as phonemic for Ewondo; but this study regards long vowels as sequence of identical vowels. Since sequences of non-identical vowels have to be set up in any event, this does not mean setting up an additional type of syllable structure. Also, setting up long vowels as sequences of identical vowels makes it possible to reduce the number of tone phonemes, or tonemes, by two. If long vowels are set up as phonemic, or if vowel length is made phonemic, then one has to set up a rising toneme /ˇ/ and a falling toneme /^/; but if long vowels are regarded as sequences or 2 syllables, a tone is analyzed as occurring on each vowel of the sequence, e.g. /V̀V́/ and /V́V̀/.

Also, the informant used for this study does not make minimal-pair vowel-length contrasts of single morphemes that are mentioned in some of the literature, e.g. /kón/, *beans*, and /kón/, *return of a dead person, spirit*. These are homophones for the speaker used for this study, but the writer cannot say whether other speakers have a long vowel in *spirit*.[8]

There are many occurrences of sequences of identical vowels, especially when a word ending in a vowel is followed by a word beginning with the same vowel, or when adjacent vowels are assimilated to the same vowel. There are also many occurrences of variants of the same word differing in the length of number of vowels, e.g. /ɑkol/ or /ɑkoól/, *foot, leg,* as conditioned in a particular context.

Utterance-final vowels, like utterance-final consonants, are lengthened and become voiceless. Another way of describing this would be: an utterance-final vowel is followed by another vowel with the same tongue position which rapidly devoices. However, this is a feature of final juncture and not a sequence of two phonemic vowels. Final vowels are also a bit more open.

1.4.2. All 8 vowels occur medially and finally, but only /i, e, ɑ, o/ occur initially. All 4 syllabic nasals occur initially, but in no other position, since they lose their syllabicity in non-initial positions. All syllabic nasals have a variant of /ə/ plus nasal, in which case the /ə/ carries the tone otherwise carried by the syllabic nasal and the syllabic nasals lose their syllabicity. Syllabic nasals are more frequent than initial /ə/ plus nasal.

There are severe restrictions on the sequence of vowels that can occur in a radical. Back vowels precede front and central vowels, and higher vowels precede lower vowels; but /ɑ/ can precede /i/. The back-over-front rule takes precedence over the high-over-low rule. Many two-syllable radicals have the same vowel in both syllables. Some examples are: (back over front) /búdi/, *cover*; (high over low) /dzíé/, *fingernail;* (/ɑ/ over /i/) /wɑ́ndi/, *rake;* and (same vowel) /wulu/, *walk, go.*

1.4.3. Numerous vowel contractions and elisions occur. Some of these are mutual assimilations. The verb *want*, /ɑyi/, which is also a future marker, is nearly always /ee/. It is written "ayi" in the orthography. The preposition /ɑ́/, *to, at, in, on,* assimilates with /o/, e.g. /ɑ́ oŋgóla/, *to the fence/city/Yaoundê* becomes /óŋgōla/.

/ə/ is nearly always dropped before or after a vowel, usually without morphophonemic influence from the tone of the /ə/, especially if the /ə/ is low-toned.

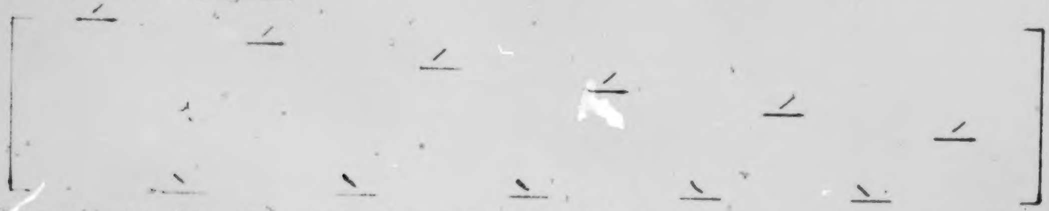
1.4.4. There are some important differences between the usual Ewondo orthography and the phonemic system used in this grammar. The huge majority of words written with "ŏ", i.e. /ɔ/, are nearly always pronounced /oɑ/ if before a consonant and /uɔ/, /uɑ/, or /oɑ/ if final. For example, "fŏg", *one*, is nearly always /fóɑ́g/, and "nlŏ", *a fly*, is nearly always /ǹluɔ/; but though only /ondundoɑ/ occurs in the speech of the speaker used in this study for "ondŏndŏ", *needle*, he is aware that other speakers of other dialects do say /ondunduɑ/ and /ondɔndɔ/. Also, the speaker used herein says only /tsɔ́s/, *church*, but the writer has heard /tsóɑ́s/. Forms written with /oɑ/ in this grammar may be pronounced either /oɑ/ or /ɔ/, but forms written /ɔ/ herein occur only with /ɔ/, e.g. /ǹsɔŋ/, *beak, bill, snout, point.* /oɑ/ is by far the most common pronunciation of the forms written herein as /oɑ/, but apparently some people tend to feel that /ɔ/ is somehow "better" or "more prestigious" even though /oɑ/ nearly always occurs in these words. To speakers of English /oɑ/ usually sounds like /wa/. The verb prefix "e-" is also written /i-/.

The noun class prefix /i-/ is usually written "e-", but it is nearly always pronounced /i-/, e.g. "ele", *tree,* pronounced /ilé/. It is written /i-/ in this grammar. The orthography writes a contrast between vowels and semivowels in the environment after consonant and before vowel. For example, /tíe/, *set sail, weigh anchor,* and /tíe/, *pull out/away,* are written "tíe" and "tyé", respectively; and /túé/, *true, truth,* and /túé/, *breast, chest,* are written "túé" and "twé", respectively.[9] But, the speaker used for this study pronounces each pair the same, as indicated. They are therefore homophones and are written /tíe/ and /túé/, respectively, in this grammar since this is the pronunciation used by the speaker whose speech is herein described.

Final /l/ and final /g/ are often written (final /g/ often written "k"). Final /l/ seldom occurs in speech. Final /g/ in grammatical morphemes, e.g. /ki(g)/, *(be) not*, also occurs infrequently in speech, but final /g/ in radicals usually occurs in speech even in utterance-final position.

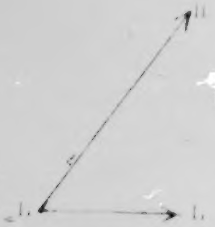
1.5. The 3 tones of Ewondo are relative, i.e. the distances between the tones are not constant, exact musical intervals. The interval between high and mid is about a musical third, i.e. a difference of one note on the piano. Speakers of English can approximate this interval by singing the beginning of the children's song, "Three Blind Mice". These three notes sound like a sequence of high mid mid. The interval between mid and low is usually somewhat greater than the interval between high and mid.

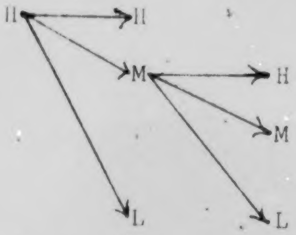
Ewondo is a terraced-tone language, i.e. intonation occurs with syllable tone to give a decreasing interval between high and low. After a low, a high is lower than the previous high by the same interval as a mid. This will be clearer in a diagram.



Thus, it can be seen that if a syllable with low tone is elided or omitted the down-stepped high is the same as a mid. No doubt this is the origin of mid tone.

Mid tone occurs only after a high or a mid. After a low, there are only two choices: remain on the same level, i.e., remain low; or rise to a higher level, i.e., rise to high. After a high or mid, there are three choices: remain on the same level, i.e. a high; descend about a musical third, i.e., drop to a mid; and descend more than a third, i.e. drop to low. This may be diagrammed as follows.





Every syllable in Ewondo must have a tone. These tones are as much a part of a syllable, morpheme, or word as vowels. There are also grammatical tones, i.e. tones that mark such grammatical meanings as *tense*. Grammatical tones are superimposed on certain syllables, i.e. grammatical tones may replace the usual tones of a syllable, word, or morpheme. These will be discussed in the sections on grammar where they apply.

Ǹtómbə ósí ki á afúb. Ǹtómb ōsí ky āfūb.	*The distinguished person is not on the farm.*

The sentence above illustrates the occurrence of many mid tones in fast speech. The /a/ of /ǹtómba/, *important person*, is elided before a following /ɔ/, but its low tone is not lost. The influence of its low tone persists in the lowering of the high of the /o/ of /ósí/ to a mid. The /i/ of /ki/, *not*, can become a semivowel /y/ before another vowel, but its tone is not lost. The influence of its low tone persists in lowering the preposition /á/ to mid. /á/ would almost always contract or assimilate with a following vowel. When /á/ contracts with the /a/ of /afúb/, the low tone of the /a/ prefix is not lost, but its influence persists in the lowering of the stem vowel of /afúb/ to mid, thereby giving /áfūb/; and, as explained above, /áfūb/ becomes /āfūb/.

Məŋgátələ ɲɲúán sigá á məmanɔ́. *I finally stopped smoking.*

The above sentence illustrates the non-raising of a low to a mid after two highs and before a high. The /ɲ̀-/ prefix of /ɲ̀ɲúán/, *drinking*, loses its tone when following a vowel, and /ə/ plus /ɲ̀-/ becomes a single syllable. However, the tone of the /ə/ is not usually raised to mid, since there were originally two low ones, one on /ə/ and one on /ɲ̀-/.

Also, the first vowel of /sigá/, *cigar(ettes)*, is not usually raised to mid, since a vowel cluster with two high tones counts only as a single high. Thus, the /i/ of /siga/ remains low toned.

Uncontracted Form	Contracted Form	Meaning
ŋgə́ asɔ́	ŋg ásɔ̄	*if he comes*
ŋgə òsɔ́ okídí	ŋg ós ōkīdí	*if you come tomorrow*
miínə áyób	miín āyób	*You are upstairs.*
misí ki ásí	misí ky āsí	*You are not downstairs.*
é ɲē ɲɔ́	é ɲ ɲɔ̄	*He is here.*
díbi ánə á ndá	díb ān ā ndá	*It is dark in the house.*

1.5.3. A high tone becomes a mid after a rising tone, i.e. a cluster of a low plus a high vowel, e.g. /maáwōg ki/, *I don't hear/feel/perceive.*

1.6. In addition to the assimilations discussed above, various assimilations between vowels in adjacent syllables also occur. Vowel assimilations may take place with or without an intervening consonant. Therefore, in searching for a word in the dictionary one may have to look up both a different tone and a different vowel from what occurred in speech or in a text.

Low (in tongue position, not tone) vowels are raised to a mid vowel when followed by a high vowel. /mabɔ bisíé/, *I am working*, becomes /mabo bisíé/. The high vowel /i/ in /bi-/ raises the /ɔ/ of /bɔ/ to /o/, giving /mabo/.

When a front vowel follows a back vowel in a cluster, the front vowel is usually assimilated to the back vowel when another word follows, especially if both vowels are on the same level, i.e. both mid or both high. For example, /ńsōé/, *lizard*, becomes /ńsōó/, and /ɑbúí/, *much*, becomes /ɑbúú/.

When /ɑ/ follows /o/, it is often assimilated to /o/ if another word follows, e.g. /mətoɑ́/, *I am sitting*, often becomes /mətoó/. When an /ɑ/ precedes an /o/, it nearly always is elided, but its tone is not lost, e.g. /ɑ́ osú/, *in front of*, becomes /ósū/.

1.5.1. In most cases, when a vowel is elided, its tone or the influence of its tone occurs on an adjacent syllable, usually the following syllable.

The definite article /é/, *the, this*, is elided at conversation speed, but its tone influences the tone on following syllables. /óŋgōlɑ/, *the fence*, is a contraction of /é oŋgóla/. When the first vowel of the article is elided, the high tone of the article occurs on the first syllable of the following word; but the influence of the elided low tone is not lost. The second high in the uncontracted phrase occurs with downstep because of terraced-tone intonation. The influence of the elided low is seen in the mid tone of the contracted phrase, which is the same amount of downstep from the preceding high as the downstep in terraced-tone intonation.

1.5.2. A low following two or more highs and preceding a high is raised. For some speakers such a raised low is apparently a little lower than a mid; for others it is indistinguishable from a mid. In this grammar, it will be marked as mid. /bóɑ́n bóè/, *your children*, has a low at end, but /bóán bóē bákù(s).../,*your children are buying* ...., has a low raised to mid.

The low of a syllabic nasal may be raised to mid at slow speed between highs. /wɑyi mɔ́ŋgɔ́ mfē/, *which child do you want?* might become /wɑyi mɔ́ŋgɔ́ m̄fé/ if pronounced slowly and carefully, but it will nearly always be /wɑyi mɔ́ŋgɔ́ mfē/, since syllabic nasals lose their syllabicity at conversation speed. Yet the low of the syllabic nasal is still seen in the downstep, i.e. the mid, on the following syllable.

FOOTNOTES

1. Guthrie, Comparative Bantu, Vol. 2, p.32

2. Alexandre, Système verbal et prédicatif du Bulu, pp.10-12.

3. In the traditional orthography and other orthographies used to write Ewondo, various solutions have been tried to distinguish the phonemes of Ewondo with greater and lesser degrees of success, /e/, /ɛ/, and /ə/ have been written "e". Sometimes /ɛ/ has been written "e̦" or "e̲", and /ə/, "ë". Likewise, /o/ and /ɔ/ have been written the same or distinguished by using "o" and "ǫ" or "o̲". /ŋ/ has been written "ng", "ṅ", or "ŋ". /ɲ/ appears as "ny", "n̄", and "ń".
In June 1970 the Cameroonian Minister of National Education held a meeting with the cooperation of UNESCO at which five countries, Congo, Gabon, Central African Republic, Chad, and Cameroon, established a general orthography for writing the languages of the area. Symbols for writing each language are chosen from the general UNESCO orthography. The main consideration of the conference seems to have been setting up a typewriter keyboard which could type all the languages of these five countries, including English and French. Since no typewriter keyboard could contain enough symbols to do this, orthographic cluster solutions were recommanded for representing some phonemes. See Bot Ba NJock, La transcription moderne des languages africaines, passim.
The phonemic transcription used herein follows the UNESCO orthography except possibly for /ɲ/. In Bot NJock, op. cit., p.47, the second "n" after "m" and before "ŋ" seems to have been meant to be "ɲ". This seems to be a typing error; and the author probably meant the second "n" to be an "ɲ". In this grammar the phoneme /ɲ/ is written "ɲ" since this will avoid a number of possible confusions with "n" and "y" in various combinations.

4. See page 15 for an explanation of *stem*.

5. A spectogram is made by passing an electrical needle over a specially coated paper. As the needle passes over the paper, a series of electrical filters separates the various pitches and intensities of sound and a diagram of the pitches and intensities (loudness) is burnt into the coating on the paper. Such a diagram is sometimes called printed speech.

6. Abega writes final voiced consonants except /s/ in his orthography. See Abega page 1 and passim. Ntsimi, my informant, writes final consonants voiced except for /s/. One could of course argue that this is influence of the traditional orthography, but the writer discounts this since he hear these as voiced. Also, if one writes voiceless stops in final position, one would still have to write a final /b/ since there is no /p/ except in loanwords.

7. For a description of mellowness, see Jakobson, Fant, and Halle, Preliminaries to Speech Analysis, p.47.

8. Cf. Abega p.3.

9. loc. cit.

STEM AND WORD FORMATION

A stem is the lexical-meaning-bearing unit to which various prefixes, suffixes, and grammatical tones may be added to form words. Some stems do occur as independent words, but the huge majority of stems occur with prefixes, and many occur with suffixes. Most stems cannot be said to belong to a word class, i.e. to be a noun, verb, etc., unless they occur with prefixes and/or suffixes.

In a few cases, the meaning of the stem is transparent and easily stated; but in most cases the stem has a general or basic meaning which has a range of related referents in combination with various affixes and grammatical environments. Even with affixes, the exact meaning of a word may not be clear until it occurs in a sentence.

Stems like /fó/, *field mouse*, and /kúb/, *chicken*, occur as independent words; but stems like /-od/, *person*, *man*, and /-lú/, *night*, do not occur without either a singular or plural noun prefix, i.e. /mod/, *person*, *man*, or /bod/, *people*, *men*; and /ɑlú/, *night*, or /məlú/, *nights*. Likewise, stems like /bɔ/, *do*, *make*, do not occur without either a prefix and/or a suffix unless they are a part of a verb phrase and another verb in the phrase has a prefix and/or suffix, e.g. /ɑbɔ/, *he/she is making/doing*.

/bəgə́/ has the general meaning of *carry*, *be loaded*. If it is used as a verb, as in /ɑbəgə́/, it means, *he/she is carrying (a load)*, *he/she is loaded/has a load*. With the Class 1 prefix, /m̀bəgə/ means *a porter*, *one who carries/is carrying*, but with the Class 3 prefix, /m̀bəgə/ means *a burden*, *a load*, *something to be carried or loaded*. /fum/ has the general meaning *white*, *light to medium gray*. If it is used as a verb, it means *be white*. With the Class 5 prefix, /ɑfum/ means *the color white*, *whiteness*, *white*. With the Class 3 prefix, /m̀fúm/ means *a white person*, *a white thing*, or is used as the modifier of another noun and means *white*. (Ewondo has no true adjectives, but nouns do serve as modifiers of other nouns in a similar way to the use of *brick* in the noun phrase *a brick house*.

In some cases, there is a formally marked difference between agent and artifact nouns. When such a difference is marked, it is the artifact noun that is so marked. For example, /síli/ as a verb means *ask (a question)*. /ǹsíli/ means *a questioner*, *one who asks a question*; but /ǹsílí/ means *a question*. Note the high tone on the last syllable of /ǹsílí/, the artifact, i.e. the thing made or constructed. Compare these with the words derived from /fum/ as given above. Note that it is the agent and artifact nouns that are marked by the high tone and that the verbal noun /ɑfum/ has no tone mark or change from the stem. Note that *verbal noun* is used here to designate *nouns of quality or characteristic which are derived from stems with a verb meaning*. These nouns designate *events or states*. Those nouns which designate *the action of the verb* will be called *gerunds*, e.g. /ǹdzíbɑn/, *stealing*, *the action of stealing*.

lúg	*marry*	alúg	*marriage*
dzɔ́	*say*	adzó	*speech, conversation*
bíáli	*be born*	abíálí	*birth*
did	*be heavy*	adid	*weight; heavy*

The stems given just above are all consonant initial. Event-state verbal nouns with vowel-initial stems also occur in Class 5. These begin in /d-/.

wúm	*be famous*	dúmá	*honor, fame*
wulu	*walk, run*	dulu	*trip, journey*

Abstract nouns denoting *human qualities* are usually found in Class 6. Such human qualities seem to be classified as *bulk* or *mass* items and are therefore in Class 6.

tag	*be joyful*	mintag	*joy*
túni	*atone, sacrifice, compensate, repay*	mətúnəŋa	*atonement, compensation*

See the discussion of these in the section on noun classes.

In other cases, it is more difficult to predict the related meanings. /lóáb/ as a verb means *fish, angle*; but with the Class 3 prefix /ǹlóáb/ means *fishhook*. /lod/ as a verb means *go/pass by*; but with the Class 3 prefix, /ǹlod/ means *a small river, brook, creek*. One might think that /ǹlod/ has no connection with /lod/, but the meaning of /ǹlod/ is *the thing that is passing by, the passerby*, i.e. *the stream that is passing by*.

Derived stems are formed by a number of suffixes which are added to stems that have verb-like meanings, and these suffixes change or add to the grammatical and/or lexical meaning of the stem. Derived stems can also be nouns if they occur with noun-class prefixes. For details, see the section on verb extensions and suffixes.

yə́gə	*learn*	yə́gələ	*teach*
ǹyə́gə	*student*	ǹyə́gələ	*teacher*

Reduplication:

Derived stems can be formed by partial reduplication of the stem. The meaning of a reduplicated stem is *having the characteristic or quality of*, and there are at least nine types: *characteristic, person with characteristic, intense, somewhat, completely, excessively or out of control, only, certain,* and *clarity*.

Having the Characteristic/Quality of:

díg	*burn, be on fire*	idídiga	*burnt, have burnt edges/ scars*
bole	*be broken up*	ibóbolɑ	*broken up*
kuli	*untie*	ikúkuli	*untied*
fɛd	*close, shut*	ifəə́fədə	*closed, shut*

Person Having the Characteristic/Quality of:

wúb	*theft*	ǹwúwúb	*thief*
wɔŋ	*fear*	ǹwúwɔ́ŋ	*fearful person, nervous Nellie*
fəg	*intelligence, wisdom*	m̀fəfəg	*intelligent person*
okoɑn	*disease, illness*	ŋ̀kukóɑ́n	*sick person*

Having the Intense Characteristic/Quality of:

ŋ́koe	*bachelor*	ŋ̀kukoe	*confirmed bachelor*
móɑ́n	*baby, small child*	omómóɑ́n	*very small baby*
dzɑ(1)	*compound, village*	idzə́dzɑlɑ	*president's/governor's mansion*
mod	*person, human being*	imomódo	*giant, ogre*
ndɑ́	*house, building*	ondə́ndə́	*shack*

/imomódo/ and /ondə́ndə́/ are pejorative and occur only in traditional stories, except to insult someone.

Having the Characteristic/Quality Completely:

búdi	*cover*	ibúbúdú	*completely covered*
bɔ	*do, make*	ibɔbɔ́ɔ́	*completely done/made*
kə	*go, leave*	ikəkə́	*gone/left for good*
sɔ́	*arrive, come*	isɔ́sɔ́ɔ́	*come and never leave*
dí	*eat*	idídíí	*completely eaten up (e.g. by a moth)*

Having the Characteristic/Quality Excessively/Out of Control:

díŋ	*love*	idiídiŋi	*uncontrolled love*
kə	*go, leave*	ikəə́kəə	*wandering aimlessly, ramble without purpose*
tsíg	*cut off*	itsítsigi	*cut up in just any sloppy fashion*
bəbə	*look, observe*	ibəə́bəə	*look/search for everywhere without knowing where to look*
dí	*eat*	idídii	*eat anything/endlessly even though not hungry*

Having the Characteristic/Quality of Only/No More Than:

Mabələ́ kálada mbóám̀bóág.	*I have only one book.*

This type of reduplication occurs with numbers. /m̀bóá(g)/ means *one*.

Having the Characteristic/Quality for Certain:

Məvód(ə́) mətán másūsub m̀bim ókpən.

Five nets will certainly catch the antelope.
Five nets cannot fail to catch the antelope.

Clearly Having the Characteristic/Quality:

túé	*truth; true*	tútúé	*truth; true*

Since /tûế/, *breast, chest*, is a homonym of /tûế/, *truth, true*, it may not be clear in some contexts which word is meant. If there is any ambiguity, /tûtûế/ is used to mean *truth, true*.

NOUN CLASSES

See also the following section on noun formation.

Ewondo, like Bantu languages in general, has a set of noun classes which are marked by prefixes. The noun classes usually occur in pairs, one of the pair indicating singular, and the other plural; however, there are numerous variations from the most common patterns. It is often difficult to give a meaning for a noun class since there are a number of subclasses in each class. In some classes, the subclasses share common semantic features; but in others, the subclasses seem to have few, if any common features or domains of meaning.

Classes 1 and 2

Classes 1 and 2 are the personal classes. Though most of the nouns in these classes refer to persons, there are animal names and other nouns, especially borrowings of foreign words.

The prefix for Class 1 is /m-/. Before a vowel, it is /m-/; but before a consonant, it is /N/, i.e. a homorganic nasal.

mod	*person, human being, man*	mɔ́ŋgɔ́	*child*
miníŋgá	*woman*	móán	*baby*
m̀bé	*evil person*	m̀bəlɔ́	*owner*
ǹdiŋi	*lover*	ǹdiŋan	*loved one*
ɲ̀yəgə	*learner, student*	ɲ̀ɲúu	*person who drinks too much*
ŋ̀komo	*builder, mechanic*	ŋ̀kɛɛ	*assistant, helper*

As shown in the list above, many of the nouns in Class 1 are derived from verbs. These can be agent or actor nouns like /ŋ̀komo/, characteristic or quality nouns like /m̀be/, and patient or object nouns like /ǹdiŋan/. Some nouns that may not readily appear to be derived from verbs, especially in translation, are easily seen to be so, e.g. /ɲ̀ɲiá/, *mother*, from /ɲáa/ or /ɲía/, *suckle, give to suck*, and /ǹdí/, *heir*, from /dí/, *eat*. (/ǹdí/ also means *eater*, but /ǹdíi/ means *big eater*.) /m̀bɔ/, *doer*, does not occur by itself; but it occurs in numerous phrases with other nouns, e.g. /m̀bɔ məbálá/, *healer, native doctor*, (/məbálá/ means *herbs, medicine*) and /m̀bɔ məŋgan/, *sorcerer, witch* (/məŋgan/ means *fetish, charm*.

Class 1a is the conventional designation in Bantu languages for the nouns in Class 1 that do not have a class prefix. Class 1a contains several subclasses.

Kinship terms and relationships

tadá	*my father*	ísīá	*(his) father*

Personal names

Ǹsəŋe	*Mr. Court* (from /ǹsəŋ/, *court, yard*)

Animal names

kádá	*crabb*	bəə́bɛ, biíbɛ	*toad*
wɔ, wa	*chimpanzee*	ǹsóe	*a kind of lizard*

(The high-toned nasal is not a class prefix.)

Miscellaneous nouns

óndúndúo	*pepper*	ondunduɔ	*needle*
óŋgoŋo	*a kind of lizard*	óŋgòŋgo	*improvement after having been sick*
ńsia	*ripe plantain*	ŋgoandɔ́	*blacksmith's hammer*

Personification of animals (in traditional stories)

Zəə́	*Mr. Leopard* (zəə́ Class 9)
Kűlu	*Mr. Turtle* (kű(l) Class 9)

Loan words

kábínda	*carpenter* (Eng.)	fía	*pear* (Eng.)
fulús	*police* (Eng.)	fíba	*fever* (Eng.)
fuláwa	*flower* (Eng.)	sikúlu	*school* (Eng.)

/maán/, *small, of the tribe/group of*, occurs in phrases with collective nouns to mean *an individual belonging to a group*, e.g. /maán Ewondo/, *an Ewondo, a member of the Ewondo tribe*, and /maán fulús/, *a policeman, a member of the police force.*

Each noun class has a verb subject prefix. The verb subject prefix for Class 1 is /a-/, e.g. /mod anə..../, *The man is....*

Class 2 is the plural of Class 1, including Class 1a. The prefix for Class 2 is /b-/ before a vowel and /bə-/ before a consonant.

bod	*people, persons, men*	bɔ́ŋgɔ́	*children*
biníŋgá	*women*	bóán	*babies*
bəbe	*evil people*	bəbələ	*owners*
bədiŋi	*lovers*	bədiŋan	*loved ones*
bətadá	*elders in a village*	bəɔ́nsic	*ripe plantains*
bondúndúo	*peppers*	baán fulús	*policemen*
bəkábínda	*carpenters*	bəfía	*pears*

When animals are personified in traditional stories, /bə-/ is used as the plural prefix. (The usual plurals for animals always occur if there is no personification.)

The verb subject prefix for Class 2 is /b-/ before a vowel and /bə́-/ before a consonant, e.g. /bod bə́nə..../, *The men are....*

Classes 3 and 4

Classes 3 and 4 are sometimes called the animate classes; but, in addition to animates, they also contain several other subclasses of nouns.

The prefix for Class 3 is /my-/ before a vowel and /N/ before a consonant. There are only a few nouns with /my-/.

myá(l)	*moonlight*	myə́g	*dam for fishing*

Humans with certain characteristics : (See also Persons of Related Association):

ǹsúsúg	*stupid person* (asúg *stupidity*)
ǹwúwúb	*thief* (wúb *theft*)
ŋ̀kúkúmá	*chief, rich person* (akúmá *wealth*)

Animals

ǹsíŋ	*wildcat*	ǹsɔ́ŋ	*worm*
ǹtómbá	*sheep*	ŋ̀gaán	*crocodile*

Plants

ŋ̀kɔ́g	*sugarcane, sugar*

Body parts not in pairs

ǹló	*head*	m̀bim	*corpse*
ǹnə́m	*heart*	ǹsis	*nerve, vein, muscle*

Most body parts that occur in pairs are in Class 5, but a few are in Class 3.

m̀bɑŋ	*kidney*	ǹlɑg	*horn*

Plant parts

ŋ̀kaŋ	*root*	ǹtɛm	*branch*

Natural features and materials

ŋ̀ko(l)	*hill, mountain*	ǹlod	*creek, brook*
ǹsɔ́lɔg	*sand*	ǹlúmbu	*slope, incline*

Human and animal artifacts

ŋ̀kɑ́ndɑ́	*towel, washcloth*	ǹtóm	*hat*
ǹlɔmbi	*bottle*	ŋ̀kíl	*animal path, animal burrow*
ǹdɔŋ	*road, highway*	ŋ̀kú(l)	*drum*
m̀bəgə	*parcel, package, load, burden*	ŋ̀komɑ́n	*something built/ constructed*
ŋ̀kus	*purchase, something bought*	ǹsum	*digging stick*

Many of the human artifact nouns are derived from verbs such as /bəgə/, *carry, wear,* /kom/, *make, prepare, create, build,* and /ku(s)/, *buy, purchase.*

Some abstract nouns derived from verbs are classed as human artifacts in many Bantu languages. Ewondo has several of these.

ŋ̀kɔ́bɔ	*speech, language*	ǹlɑ́ŋ	*history, story*
ŋ̀kɑd	*discussion, report, trial, negotiation*	ǹsílí	*question*

Qualities and abstract nouns of quality

ŋ̀kod	*dryness, dry*	m̀bəŋ	*beauty, beautiful; goodness, good*

These nouns often occur as modifiers of other nouns, but they also occur independently.

Activity nouns, gerunds, actions

ǹdzíbán	*stealing*	ɲ̀yídán	*beating*
ǹtaŋón	*interruption, break(ing)*	m̀bəlán	*industriousness*

These forms mean *the action of*, e.g. /ɲ̀yídán/, *the action of beating*. These forms also combine with /nə/, *be*, to make a descriptive- or passive-like construction, e.g. /énə ndzíbán/, *It is/has been stolen.*

Special use

The /N-/ prefix is used to form the names of *caterpillars that live in certain trees.*

ǹlón	*caterpiliar that lives in the elón tree (Erythrophloeum guineense)*
ɲ̀nos	*caterpillar that lives in the ayos tree (Triplochiton tessmannii)*
m̀bíŋ	*caterpillar that lives in the* abíŋ *tree*
ŋ̀kɔn	*caterpillar that lives in the* akɔŋ *tree*

The verb subject prefix for Class 3 is /w-́/ before a vowel and /ó-/ before a consonant, e.g. /ǹdɔŋ ónə..../, *The road is....* Nouns referring to persons occur both with Class 3 and Class 1 verb subject prefixes, e.g. /ŋ̀kúkúmá ónə..../, *The chief is....*, and also /ŋ̀kúkúmá ɑnə...:/, *The chief is....* See the discussion on the meaning of verb-subject prefixes.

Class 4 is the plural of Class 3. The prefix for Class 4 is /miN-/. Words that have the /my-/ prefix in Class 3 have no plural form.

miŋkúkúmá	*chiefs*	minsíŋ	*wildcats*
miŋkaŋ	*roots*	mintóm	*hats*

Abstract nouns

There are a number of abstract nouns that occur only in the plural.

mintíé	*pain*	minsɔs	*slander*
mimfəd	*contradiction*	mimfɛ́d	*quibbling, wrangling*

The verb subject prefix for Class 4 is /my´-/ before a vowel and /mî-/ before a consonant, e.g. /mindɔŋ mínə..../, *The roads are....* Nouns referring to persons occur with both Class 4 and Class 2 verb subject prefixes, e.g. /miŋkúkúmɑ́ mínə..../, *The chiefs are...*, and also /miŋkúkúmɑ́ bə́nə..../, *The chiefs are....*

Classes 5 and 6

Classes 5 and 6 are made up of several subclasses. In some subclasses, the meaning *having some quality or characteristic* can be seen; but in some subclasses, no shared semantic domain is evident.

The prefix for Class 5 is /d-/ before a vowel and /ɑ-/ before a consonant. There are also a few words with a /dz-/ prefix before a vowel and one word each with the fossilized prefixes /y-/ and /l-/ before vowels. /yǒb/, *sky, heaven, up*, and /lue/, *laughter*, have no plural.

Body parts that occur in pairs

dís	*eye*	ɑbɛ́	*thigh*
ɑfɑb	*wing*	ɑlɔ́	*ear*
ɑmɑ́ŋ	*cheek, temple*	ɑko(l)	*foot, leg*

Though body parts that do not occur in pairs are mostly in Class 3, there are some in Class 5.

dóɑ́b	*navel*	ɑsú	*face*
ɑbum	*belly, abdomen*	dzoe	*nose; name*
ɑɲu	*mouth*	dóál	*nape*

Trees

ɑsə́ŋ	*mangrove tree*	ɑndɔ́g	*mango tree*
ɑlɛ́n	*palmtree*	ɑfɑn	*forest*
ɑsɑ́	*African plum tree*	ɑtɔ́m	*wild plum tree*

Liquid diminutives

ɑndím	*a drop of water*	ɑki	*a drop of blood*
ɑɲɑ́ŋ	*a drop of milk*	ɑɲɔ́lɔ̀g	*a drop of urine*

Nouns referring to liquids are in Class 6. When these nouns occur in Class 5, they mean *a drop of, a little, a small bit of* the liquid.

Abstract qualities of persons

amvóé	*friendship*	akoe	*avarice*
akab	*generosity*	akə́ŋ	*ability*
afaŋ	*magnaminity*	aŋgoan	*female coquetteries*
dúmá	*fame*	akúd	*insanity*

Colors

avín	*black, blue, green*	afum	*white, light gray*
avié	*red, orange, yellow, pink*		

Event-state verbal nouns

akə	*departure, leaving*	awú	*death*
alúg	*marriage*	asúg	*stupidity, awkwardness*

Quantity and size

ayab	*length, long*	adíd	*weight, heavy*
abui	*much, many*	abím	*extent, large*

Other qualities

avə́b	*coldness, cold*	avóé	*coolness, cool*
asén	*smoothness, smooth* *slipperiness, slippery*	ayé	*difficulty, hard*

Miscellaneous

There are many nouns in Class 5 that do not seem to belong to any special subclass.

amos	*day*	alú	*night*
dáag	*charcoal*	abəŋgé	*bell*
abob	*spider*	abóda	*a piece of land*
ákí	*egg*	avɔ́ŋ	*fat, grease*
dza(l)	*village*	akóág	*grindstone*
dulu,	*trip, journey*	dzam	*matter, affair*
ayɔ́ŋ	*tribe*	afúb	*field, farm*

Special usage

adí *bait for fishhook or trap* (bidí *food* (Class 8))

/adí/ has no plural and /bidí/ has no singular. Obviously, they are both related to /dí/, *eat*; but these are idiomatic collective meanings.

The verb subject prefix for Class 5 is /ĺ-/ before a vowel and /á-/ before a consonant, e.g. /dulu áhə..../, *The trip is....*

Class 6 is the plural of Class 5. The prefix for Class 6 is /m-/ before a vowel and /mə-/ before a consonant.

mís	*eyes*	mulu	*trips, journeys*
mam	*matters, affairs*	móé	*noses; names*
məlú	*nights*	məlúg	*marriages*
məfab	*wings*	məlɛ́n	*palmtrees*

Liquids

Liquids occur in Class 6. The diminutive of liquids occurs in Class 5. See discussion of this under Class 5.

məndím	*water*	məki	*blood*
məɲáŋ	*milk*	məɲɔ́lɔ́g	*urine*
mətɛ́	*saliva*	məwú(l)	*palmoil*

Abstract nouns of human qualities

məbún	*pride, arrogance*	məlɔ́	*disobedience*

məbúa	*poverty*	mədugán	*deceit, dishonesty*

Bulk items

Things that occur in mass or bulk are sometimes found in Class 6 and with no singular form. Perhaps bulk items and liquids should be regarded as the same subclass.

məbuda	*sweet potatoes*	məkaba	*macabo (yam type)*

Bulk items that occur in Class 9 and have a plural in Class 10 can have an alternate plural in Class 6 meaning *lots of, much.*

məndzaag	*lots of firewood*	məŋgoag	*lots of gravel*

Other nouns from Class 9 which have an alternate plural in Class 6 might also be considered bulk items if the meaning of *bulk* is extended metaphorically.

məndúɔ́ŋ	*lots of stories/ reports*	məŋgoam	*lots of drums/ drumming*

Some nouns having no singular and having several parts or pieces might also be considered "bulk items".

mədzáŋ	*xylophone, marimba*	məvəg	*brideprice*

Exception

Though /ndá/, *house,* from Class 9 has an alternate plural /məndá/, it does not mean *lots of houses.* Some speakers have only /məndá/ as the plural of /ndá/.

Foreign words

Foreign words beginning with "m" may be borrowed into Class 6.

mákíd	*market*	mílíg	*canned milk*

The English word *whites* has been borrowed into Class 9 as /wɔ́d/, meaning *clothing made from a heavy white cloth.* The plural /mɔ́d/ is in Class 6.

English *watch* has been borrowed into Class 11 as /wás/ or /wɔ́s/. The plural /móás/ or /más/ is in Class 6.

The verb subject prefix for Class 6 is /ḿ-/ before a vowel and /mə́-/ before a consonant, e.g. /mulu mə́nə..../, *The trips are....*

Classes 7 and 8

Classes 7 and 8 are made up of several subclasses. Some subclasses contain *small things*, some mean *existing in some state or condition*, and some have no apparent shared features.

The prefix for Class 7 is /dz-/ before a vowel and /i-/ before a consonant. /i-/ is usually written with an "e", even though it is nearly always pronounced "i". There are not many nouns with the /dz-/ prefix.

Condition-state nouns derived from verbs

idíŋ	*love*	iki	*prohibition, abstention*
ikóɑn	*reunion*	iɲiŋ	*life*
ikɑg	*curse*	isíé	*work, job*

Result-state nouns

itsítsigɑ	*a cut, a cut place*	iɲeéɲɑbɑ	*a tear, a torn place*

Instruments and tools (with /-gɑ/, *instrument*)

itíégɑ	*bottle/can opener, corkscrew; pull-knob*	idibigɑ	*key, can/bottle opener*
ibúdgɑ	*lid, cover*	ivúɔg, ivóogɑ	*broom*

Body parts containing fluids

iɲɔ́lɔg	*bladder*	iɲɑ́ŋ	*udder, teat*

Body parts with several pieces or large area

isíl	*hair*	ivɛs	*bone*
dzíé	*finger/toenail; claw*	ikob	*skin; bark*
iyəgəs	*chin*	ikúdɑ	*fist*

A few words for body parts that occur in pairs appear in Class 7.

itu(l)	*shoulder*	ibə́bɑ́s	*shoulder blade*

Colors

ihɔ́lɔ	*medium brown, orange, light blue*	ivíndi	*black, blue, green*

Unlimited, uncontrolled action (with reduplication)

iboóbuɔ	*do things with no goal/purpose*
ikəə́kəə	*wander around with no goal/purpose*

Finished, completed action (with reduplication)

idídí	*eat up completely*	**ikəkə́**	*leave for good*

Augmentative, superlative (with reduplication)

imvúvám	*great-grandparent*	**imomódo**	*giant, ogre*
indədam	*spread out, very wide*	**idzə́dza(lá)**	*large village*
itétana	*large, round net*	**iŋgə́ŋgə́n**	*broad daylight,* *a clear explanation*

Small things

idu	*mouse*	**itun**	*a short piece*
iɲem	*match (to light)*	**ibag**	*hoe*

Foreign words

ikabəlí	*horse* (Port.)	**ikíb**	*team* (Fr.)

Miscellaneous

dzom	*thing*	**dziá**	*song*
ilé	*tree*	**ilέ**	*a glass*
ibóŋ	*bedroom, sleeping place*	**inoŋ**	*bed*
ibé	*pit, hole*	**itoá**	*chair*
ikúm	*stump*	**ikódo**	*yam*

The verb subject prefix for Class 7 is */y-́/* before a vowel and /í-/ before a consonant, e.g. /ilé ínə..../, *The tree is....*

See also the formation of compound verbal nouns in the section on the formation of nouns. See also the sections on nouns of intimate association and persons of related association in the section on the formation of nouns.

The prefix for Class 8 is /by-/ before a vowel and /bi-/ before a consonant.

byɛ́m	*things*	biɑ́	*songs*
bilé	*tree*	bisíé	*work, jobs*

There are a number of abstract nouns in Class 8 that have no singular. Most of them have a perjorative meaning.

bivie	*arrogance, audaciousness*	bimɔ	*gabbing, extended conversation*
bizɑbí	*joking, teasing*	bizuúgɑ́	*pardon, forgiveness*

The verb subject prefix for Class 8 is /by-́/ before a vowel and /bí-/ before a consonant, e.g. /bilé bínə..../, *The trees are....*

Classes 9 and 10

Classes 9 and 10 are so varied in the nouns that they contain that no division into truly meaningful subclasses can be made. The groupings of nouns listed below are merely for convenience. Classes 9 and 10 have the same form; but some nouns with the singular in Class 9 have the plural in other classes, especially Class 2 and Class 6. There are alternate plurals in Class 10 and Class 6 for some nouns; some speakers will have only one of these plurals, but some will have both.

Some nouns in Classes 9 and 10 have the prefix /N-/, i.e. a non-syllabic homorganic nasal. Some nouns have no prefix, but some nouns with no overt prefix have undergone a morphophonemic change of the initial consonant, e.g. a change of /s-/ to /z-/.

Persons (with plural in Class 2)

kɑ́(l)	*sister of a male*	ndóm	*brother of a female*
ŋgoɑn	*girl, daughter*	mvóé	*friend*
mvɑ́m	*grandparent*	mvɑ́n	*co-wife*

Nouns with alternate plural in Class 6

ndɑ́	*house*	ndúɔ́ŋ, ndɔ́ŋ	*story, report*
ndzɑɑg	*firewood*	ŋgoɑg	*gravel*
fóé	*news*	fɑ	*machete, bushknife*

The informant used for this study has only the plurals /məndɑ́/, *houses*, and /məndúɔ́ŋ/, *stories, reports*; but other speakers have only a Class 10 plurals, i.e., same form as the singular; and some speakers have both plurals. For things that occur in bulk like /ŋgoɑg/ and /ndzɑɑg/, the usual plural is in Class 10. If the Class 6 plural is used, it means *lots of, much.*

Nouns with morphophonemic change

ziŋ	*hate, hatred*	(siŋ	*hate* (verb))
zig	*saw, grater*	(sig	*saw* (verb))
zuli	*terminal/due date*	(suli	*come due/to an end*)
zuŋa	*argument, disagreement*	(suŋa	*argue, disagree)*
ŋgob	*shoe*	(ikob	*hide, skin, peeling)*
ŋgoag	*small, hand-held grindstone*	(akóág	*large, flat grindstone; rock, stone)*

Abstract nouns from verbs

ŋgab	*share, portion*	ŋgaán	*praise*
ŋgog(ə)lán	*request, prayer*	ŋgalná	*answer, response*
mvulná	*similarity, resemblance*	ndzɔ́bi	*slip of the tongue*

Miscellaneous

tsíd	*animal*	kúb	*chicken*
zəg	*pineapple*	sí	*ground, earth*
fəg	*intelligence*	ɲó(l)	*body*
mvú	*dog*	ŋguúb	*hippopotamus*
kíé	*leaf*	kíŋ	*voice*
zam	*raffia palm*	kídí	*morning*
ŋgu(l)	*strength, strong*	kóme	*hazelnut*
ndam	*width, wide*	ndə́g	*calabash bottle*
ŋgá(l)	*rifle, gun*	mvoaɛ́	*health, quiet, peace*

Foreign words

fóm	*pump* (Fr.)	kolós	*cross* (Eng.)
ŋgómәna	*government* (Fr.)	tsɛ́n	*chain* (Eng.)

wɔ́d	*whites (clothing)* (Eng.)	tsóás	*church* (Eng.)

The plurals for /tsɛ́n/ and /wɔ́d/ are in Class 6, /mətsɛ́n/ and /mɔ́d/.

The verb subject prefix for Class 9 is /y-/ before a vowel and /i-/ before a consonant, e.g. /mvú inə..../, *The dog is....* The verb subject prefix for Class 10 is /ý-/ before a vowel and /í-/ before a consonant, e.g. /mvú ínə..../, *The dogs are....*

Class 11

Class 11 is the class of *small and/or pejorative things*, but there are subclasses that have neither of the qualities.

The class prefix is /v-/ before an /i/ vowel, /w-/ before other vowels, and /o-/ before a consonant. Nouns beginning with /v-/ and /w-/ have no plural form, except /wɔ́, wɑ́/, *hand, arm*, which has its plural in Class 6 /mɔ́, móɑ/, and /vóm/, *place*, which has its plural in Class 6, /məvóm/. (See discussion of /vóm/ under Classes 16 and 19.) Nouns with the /o-/ prefix have their plural in Class 5, i.e. /ɑ-/, except /oŋgóla/, *fence, town*, which has its plural in Class 2, /boŋgóla/. There are also a few other irregular nouns.

In forms beginning with /vi-/, the informant used in this study had an alternate form in [ž], the middle consonant sound in English *measure, treasure*, as in [viɛ́, žoɛ́] *mushroom*, and [víɑ́n, žíɑ́n], *sunshine*; but none of the other informants used had a [ž].

Undesirable or pejorative qualities

osɑ́mɑ́	*humiliation*	osóɑn	*shame*
wúb	*theft, stealing*	wɔŋ	*fear*
olún	*anger*	okɑ́g	*avarice*

Small animals, birds, and things

onoɑ́n	*bird*	osúson	*ant*
odzóɛ́	*dwarf antilope*	obəŋ	*pigeon*
okɔŋ	*knife*	olɑ́m	*trap for small animals*
okɛ́ndɛ́	*lamb*	owondo	*peanut, groundnut*
viɛ́	*mushroom*	ɑnu	*finger*

The plural /ɑlɑ́m/ means *traps for small animals*; /mɛlɑ́m/ means either *lots of traps for small animals* or *traps for large animals*.

Diminutive and/or pejorative nouns (with reduplication)

omómóán	*little, deformed, ugly child*	(móán *baby*)
ondəndá	*shack, little old house*	(ndá *house*)
olélé, olelé	*bush, shrub*	(ilé *tree*)
otsítsíd	*very small animal*	(tsíd *animal*)
omomód	*ogre, monster, weird little man*	(mod *person, man*)
obébē	*small pot*	(mve *pot*)

Diminutives meaning "somewhat" or "a little"

otətəg	*somewhat slow, careful*	osəsa	*somewhat friendly*
ovəvəs	*rather light*	odídiga	*rather prompt*

Space and time adverbials

okídí	*tomorrow*	oŋgogé	*yesterday*
oyab	*far*	osú	*front; first*

Miscellaneous

okíé	*banana leaf*	wé	*honey*
osóé	*river*	viaŋ	*chevrotain*

There are also a few irregular nouns, e.g. /má(l)/, *canoe*, which now have the same form in the singular and plural. Apparently, /má(l)/ is an old Class 6 plural that has moved into Class 11. /olɔɔ́/, /oluɔ́/, /oloá/, *slave*, has its plural in Class 5; but when referring to the old Slave Clan, the plural is /bəlɔɔ́/.

Foreign words

wás, wɔ́s	*watch* (Eng.) (Plural /mɔ́s/, /móás/, Class 6)

The verb subject prefix for Class 11 is /w-/ before a vowel and /ó-/ before a consonant, e.g. /okəŋ óna..../, *The knife is....*

Classes 16 and 19

The old locative Classes 16 and 19 have merged with Class 11 and take the Class 11 verb subject prefix. This explains the form /vɔ́m/, *place*, which has a /v/ though not before an /i/, as would be expected in Class 11. Most of these locatives are phrases formed with /ɑ́/, *in, on, at, to*, and they can function like nouns in a sentence, e.g. as a subject, as in /ɑ́ ndɑ́ oyóŋ/, *In the house is hot.*

Noun class and verb subject prefixes

		Class Prefix	Subject Prefix		Class Prefix	Subject Prefix
before C	Class 1	N̩-	ɑ-	Class 2	bə-	bə́-
before V		m-	ɑ-		b-	b-́
before C	Class 3	N̩-	ó-	Class 4	miN̩-	mí-
before V		my-	w-́		(no plural)	my-́
before C	Class 5	ɑ-	ɑ́-	Class 6	mə-	mə́-
before V		d- dz-	l-́		m-	m-́
before C	Class 7	i-	í-	Class 8	bi-	bí-
before V		dz-	y-́		by-	by-́
before C	Class 9	N-	i-	Class 10	N-	í-
before V		(none)	y-		(none)	y-́
before C	Class 11	o-	ó-	Class 5	ɑ-	ɑ́-
before V	(before i) (before other V)	v- w-	w-́		(no plural)	

NOUN FORMATION

Personal-Characteristic Nouns: Reduplication:

Nouns indicating *person(s) with a certain characteristic/quality* have the first consonant of the stem reduplicated and the consonant followed by /ə/ except when the stem consonant is /u/ or /o/, or sometimes when /ɔ/ or /i/. If the stem vowel is /u/ or /o/, the vowel after the reduplicated consonant is /u/. If the stem vowel is /ɔ/, the vowel after the reduplicated consonant may be either /ə/ or /u/. If the stem vowel is /i/, the vowel after the reduplicated consonant may be either /ə/ or /i/. Personal-characteristic nouns take the prefixes of Classes 3 and 4. See the discussion of Class 3 for additional details.

There is one word /ŋ̀kokóm/, *sterile woman,* which does not follow the rules given above for the vowel of the reduplicated syllable. /ikom/, *sterility, sterile, unfruitful,* occurs; but the verb, if it ever existed, is now lost. It is therefore difficult to try to reconstruct the derivation.

zam	*leprosy*	ǹzəzām	*leper*
biaŋ	*fetish, medicine, magic charm*	m̀bəbíáŋ	*shaman, witch doctor, magician*
mgbɛ́(l)	*sorcer[illegible]lack magic*	m̀gbəmgbɛ́l	*sorcerer, evil witch doctor*
mvɔɛ́	*health*	m̀vúmvɔ̃ɛ́	*healthy person*
asum	*careless, non-caring attitude*	ǹsusúm	*person with a careless, non-caring attitude*
məbúá	*poverty*	m̀búbúá	*poor person*
abum	*belly, abdomen*	m̀bumbúm	*pregnant woman*
akɔ́ŋ	*ability, skill*	ŋ̀kəkəŋ	*capable/skilled person*
ndím	*blindness*	ǹdíndím	*blind person*
mvúg	*muteness; mute*	m̀vúmvúg	*a mute person*

Agent Nouns:

Agent nouns have no formal mark other than the Class 1 and 2 noun-class prefixes of the person classes. Agent nouns mean *one who does,* e.g. /ŋkomo/, *builder, maker, repairer,* from /kom/, *build, construct, repair, fix.* See the discussion under Class 1 nouns for more details.

wulu	*go, walk, run, travel*	ǹwulu	*traveler, tourist*
timi	*explain, interpret translate*	ǹtimi	*interpreter, translator*
lɑd	*sew*	ǹlɑdɑ	*seamstress, tailor*
bɔ́ɑ́d	*wear/put on clothes*	mbɔdɔ	*wearer*
dí	*eat*	ǹdí	*eater; heir*
wɔ́bɔ	*bathe; rub oil on the skin*	ŋ̀wɔ́bɔ	*bather*
bəgə	*carry, load, put on clothes*	m̀bəgə	*porter, carrier*
yiɛ	*sing*	ɲ̀yiɛ	*singer*
wóg	*hear, feel, perceive*	ǹwógo	*hearer, listener*

Agent nouns can also compound with other nouns. See the discussion of compound verbal nouns for details on this sort of compounding. The compound is more explicit and/or descriptive.

kɑd	*tell, relate*	ǹlɑ́ŋ	*story, history*	ŋ̀kɑdǹlɑŋ	*storyteller*
wóé	*kill*	bod	*persons, people*	ŋ̀wóébodo	*murderer*
tsíg	*cut off*	ilé	*tree*	ǹtsígilé	*lumberjack*
kəŋ	*cut*	isi(l)	*hair*	ŋ̀kəŋisi(l)	*barber*
síé	*work*	məfub	*farm, plantation*	ǹsíéməfub	*farm/plantation worker*
bɔ	*do, make*	isíé	*work, job*	m̀bobisíé	*worker, laborer*

There are a few agent nouns in other classes, e.g. /ǹsome/, *hunter* from /some/, *hunt*, and /ɲ̀yə́gələ/, *teacher*, from /yə́gələ/, *teach*, and both of these are in Classes 3 and 4.

Instruments: Tools: /-gɑ/

Instrument nouns are formed by the /-gɑ/ suffix and take a Class 7 or Class 8 noun prefix. After a stem ending in /-ɑ/, /-gɑ/ has the allomorph /-g/; and after a stem ending in a nasal, /-gɑ/ has the allomorph /-ŋɑ/ or /-ŋə/. After a stem ending in a consonant, there is usually an intrusive /ə/; but sometimes the intrusive vowel is the same as the stem vowel, especially if the stem vowel is /i/. The tone of the instrument suffix and the tone of the intrusive vowel are low except when there are doublets derived from the same stem. One of the doublets will have high tones on both the instrument suffix and the intrusive vowel, if there is one. It is not possible to predict which of the doublets will have the high tones. See also the discussion under noun Class 7.

dib	*stop/close up*	idibígɑ́	*stopper, plug*
		idibigɑ	*key*
dií	*close, lock*	idiiga	*key*
tíé	*pull out/away*	itíegɑ	*can/bottle opener, cork-screw, pull-knob*
búdi	*cover (up)*	ibúdəgɑ	*lid, cover*
ti(l)	*smear dirt/color on, write*	itilgɑ	*pen, pencil, writing table/room*
sɑl	*split, separate by splitting*	isɑləgɑ	*ax, splitting wedge, ditch, trench*
vóé	*sweep*	ivúɔg, ivóogɑ, ivóɑg	*broom, sweeper*
bɑɛ	*strike, hack*	ibɑg	*hoe*
síi	*wipe (off)*	isíigɑ	*wiping rag, polishing cloth*
fími	*dry off*	ifím(ə)ŋɑ	*dishcloth, wiping rag*
wɑ́m	*shave, plane*	iwɑ́məŋə	*razor, (wood) plane*
bindí	*strain*	ibinəŋgɑ	*strainer, sieve*
kom	*build, construct, repair*	ikoməŋɑ	*shoemaker's last*
dím	*extinguish, put out, erase/rub out*	idíməŋɑ	*eraser (American); rubber, duster (British)*
dí	*eat*	idíigɑ	*anything eaten with soup, e.g. plantain, rice, potatoes*

The examples above show that *tool* or *instrument* must be interpreted more widely than a speaker of English or French might guess. Perhaps the best translation for /-gɑ/ is *thing to do with*. Then, a ditch can be *a splitter which separates*, and mashed plantains eaten with soup can be *an eater-wither*. (Ewondo speakers please note that *eater-wither* is a common type of amusing agent compound used only in informal spoken English, but not used at all in formal or written English.)

Instrument nouns can also compound with other nouns. See the discussion of compound verbal nouns for details on this sort of compounding. Such compounding gives a more explicit and/or descriptive instrument noun.

bilám	*alcoholic drink (from English rum)*	itíegəbílam	*corkscrew*
sέn	*nail, pin, tack*	itíegəsɛn	*pliers, tongs*

Human and Animal Artifacts:

Some instrument-like nouns are in Class 3 and Class 4, e.g. /ǹsum/, *digging stick*, from /sum/, *bore/hack out a hole in the ground, stick something into the ground.* One might be led to think that this is another way of forming instrument nouns, but nouns formed by the Class 3 /N-/ prefix mean *human or animal artifacts, things made by humans or animals*. See more details in the discussion of noun Class 3.

lɔ́b	*fish, angle*	ǹlɔ́b	*fishhook*
kɔ́bɔ	*speak, talk*	ŋ̀kɔ́bɔ	*speech, talk*
sɔm	*find*	ǹsɔm	*finding, discovery*
wa	*throw*	ńwa	*a throw, a pitch*
bánda	*invite*	m̀bándá	*news*
báag	*fold, add (to)*	m̀báaga	*folded piece*
fɛd	*bar(ricade), close*	mimfɛd	*contradiction*
kí(l)	*make/beat (down) a path*	ŋ̀kí(l)	*animal path/burrow*

Artifact nouns can also compound with other nouns. See the discussion of compound verbal nouns for details on this sort of compounding. The compound is more explicit and/or descriptive.

iyé	*cloth*	m̀bágíye	*bolt of cloth*
báag	*fold*	m̀bágə́ kālada	*folder, dossier,*

Compound Nouns: Verbal Noun Plus Object Noun

Compound verbal nouns incorporating the object of the verbal noun are formed by a Class 7 prefix on the verbal stem plus the noun object. /ibibod/, *(police) roundup/raid*, is formed by the Class 7 prefix /i-/, /bi/, *seize, catch*, and /bod/, *people, persons*, literally *a catchpeople.* /ibibod/ has been extended to mean *arrest, control point/roadblock at* *which personal identity papers and vehicle titles are checked.* Formerly, /idibod/ meant *corvée labor for porter service*, a colonial practice no longer used. Thus, it can be seen that it is difficult to determine the meaning of these compound nouns even if one knows all the constituent elements. The meaning of noun compounds has to be learned just like that of any other vocabulary item. Also, the meaning of the compound verbal nouns seems to be more susecptible to change than that of nouns in general.

ibibod	*(police) roundup, raid, roadblock, checkpoint*
ıbalzɛn	*clearing of a path (of weeds with a hoe)*
isobŋɔ́	*bodywashing (a religious rite to heal a sick person*
ikabmiŋkús	*distribution/allotting of widows (after the death of a man*
idubod	*baptism, dunking of people*

Abstract Nouns from Verbs:

Abstract nouns can be formed from verbs by the addition of a Class 9 prefix. See the discussion of Class 9 for the various forms of the Class 9 prefix.

koməzan	*prepare*	ŋgoməzan	*preparation*
kaman	*protect, defend*	ŋgam(əná)	*protection, defense*
kab	*distribute, share, divide*	ŋgab	*portion, share, part*
fulan	*resemble*	mvulná	*resemblance*
kogolan	*pray, beg, request*	ŋgogəlán	*prayer, request*
bénde	*command, order*	mvéndé	*law, command, regulation*
dím	*extinguish, put out*	ndím	*blindness*
siŋ	*hate*	ziŋ	*hatred, hate*
suŋa	*argue, disagree*	zuŋa	*argument, disagreement*

Event-state verbal nouns are in Class 5.

lúg	*marry*	alúg	*marriage*
dzɔ̂	*say*	adzɔ̂	*speech, conversation*
bɔ̂mɔ	*elope (with)*	abɔ̂m	*elopement*
kom	*make (ready), produce, improve*	akómo	*rebuilding, restoration, rehabilitation*

Nouns of Intimate Association:

Ewondo has no formally-marked grammatical category of alienable versus inalienable, but a number of nouns such as *human artifacts for personal use* and *things and/or persons closely associated with a person* are found in Classes 7 and 8.

iyɛ́n, iyɛ́t	*mirror*	iwoas	*brush*
ibom	*stick, cudgel*	ilúm	*fork*
ibag	*hoe*	ibədənló	*headpad for carrying*
ikombá	*first/main/chief wife*	ibɔn	*lover, sweetheart*
ibóŋ	*sleeping place, camp(ing) ground*	ibóŋgoan	*intercourse with one's lover*
itie	*standing place, place to stand*	itoá	*chair, seat, place to sit*
iɲiŋ	*life*	ivú	*a supposed body mass supposedly containing* ŋ̀nɛm, *the power to make others sick*
ikúda	*fist*		

Persons of Related Association: Special Relationship With Another Person:

Most nouns meaning *humans with certain characteristics* are in Classes 3 and 4. Some of these characteristics are *special or intimate relationship with another person.*

m̀kpə́g	*favorite wife*	m̀biás	*a twin*
ǹtɔ́	*first born*	ŋ̀kús	*widow*
ǹtí	*lord, master, Ewondo*	ǹtómba	*important/distinguished person*
m̀bóm	*daughter-in-law*	m̀bóg	*prisoner*

MODIFIER NOUNS

Ewondo doesn't really have a word class that one could call adjectives, but many nouns do act as modifiers of other nouns. For example, /m̀bəŋ/ as a head noun means *goodness, beauty*; but if it modifies another noun, it means *good, beautiful*. When serving as a modifier, a noun such as /m̀bəŋ/ has the same prefixes as when an independent noun.

There are, however, two words that do take the noun class prefix of the nouns they modify and hence could be considered as "adjectives". These are /nɛ́n/ and /tóɑ́g/.

nɛ́n *big, fat, important, powerful*

Class 1	ǹnɛ́n	Class 2	bənɛ́n
Class 3	ǹnɛ́n	Class 4	minɛ́n
Class 5	(ɑ)nɛ́n	Class 6	mənɛ́n
Class 7	(i)nɛ́n	Class 8	binɛ́n
Class 9	(n)nɛ́n	Class 10	(n)nɛ́n
Class 11	ǹnɛ́n	Class 5	(ɑ)nɛn

tóɑ́g *little, small, lesser, secondary*

Class 1	ǹtóɑ́g	Class 2	bətóɑ́g
Class 3	ǹtóɑ́g	Class 4	mitóɑ́g
Class 5	(ɑ)tóɑ́g	Class 6	mətóɑ́g
Class 7	(i)tóɑ́g	Class 8	bitóɑ́g
Class 9	tóɑ́g	Class 10	tóɑ́g
Class 11	ǹtóɑ́g	Class 5	(ɑ)tóɑ́g

When they take the noun-class prefix of the noun they modify, these noun modifiers follow the noun they modify, as do modifier and/or possessive nouns in general. In some cases, these noun modifiers precede the noun they modify. When they do precede, they take their own noun-class prefixes, in this case Classes 5 and 6. In some cases, /nɛ́n/ and /tóɑ́g/ have acquired specialized meanings.

ilé nɛ̄n	*big tree*
ilé tɔ̄ág	*small tree*
anoán nɛ̄n	*big birds*
anoán atóág	*small birds*
asoóŋ nɛ̄n	*upper incisor*
asoóŋ tɔ̄ág	*lower incisor*
ǹdzóé nnɛ́n	*important/powerful reigning chief/leader*
ǹdzóɛ́ ntɔ̄ág	*secondary leader/boss/foreman, number-two man*
mod ǹnɛ́n	*important/powerful man*
anɛ́n mod	*big/large/fat/tall man*

In the last item, the order is reversed and /nɛ́n/ precedes the noun it modifies. In this construction, /nɛ́n/ has the basic meaning of *big/large in size;* whereas in the other /nɛ́n/ has the extended meaning *important, powerful.* See the discussion below of the order modifier plus modified noun.

Attributi[illegible] Noun Phrases:

[illegible] independent nouns can precede other nouns as modifiers. When the[illegible]ede another noun as a modifier, the meaning is extended to mean *h[illegible] the characteristic(s) of the noun.*

	Independent Noun Meaning	Modifier Noun Meaning
mod	*person, man*	*big, large*
ma(á)n	*descendant/member*	*small*
ǹnóm	*husband*	*male, strong, right*
ŋ̀gá(l)	*wife*	*female, weak, left*
ɲ̀iá	*mother*	*true, real, important, serious*
dzom	*thing*	*old, ugly, bad, worthless*

Some examples will help make this clear. /ǹnóm ɔŋú/, *male digit,* translates either *thumb* or *big toe.* Items that are big and/or strong are called *male* in Ewondo, and items that are small and/or weak are called *female.*

mod koas	*big fish*
mod miníŋgá	*large woman*
man ndá	*small house*
maán mōán	*small child*
ǹnóm kúb	*rooster, male chicken*
ǹnóm fám	*strong man*
ǹnóm ɑɲú	*thumb, big toe*
ǹnóm ilé	*strong tree, tree hard to cut down*
ŋ̀gál kúb	*hen, female chicken*
ŋ̀gál ilé	*weak tree, tree easy to cut down*
ɲ̀ɲiá dzama	*important/serious matter*
ɲ̀ɲiá ŋkɔ́bɔ	*sensible/serious talk*
dís á mbɔ̄ ŋgā(l)	*left eye*
m̀bɛ́ á mbɔ̄ nnɔ̄m	*the door on the right*
ǹnóm ḿkpādá	*large bushknife*
ŋ̀gá(l) ḿkpādá	*small bushknife*
dzóm ē ndá	*worthless old house*
dzóm ē mod	*very bad person, scoundrel*
dzóm ē dzóm	*useless ugly old thing*

There are other nouns that precede modified nouns and also mean *having the characteristic(s) of,* but the number of this type of noun is not large.

dzaám mod	*capable/dynamic person*
m̀bəmbə miníŋgá	*good wife*
mimkpámáŋ bíyé	*new clothes*
akúd mod	*crazy/foolish person*
m̀bɛ́ mod	*bad/evil person*
m̀faáŋ mod	*well-to-do person, business man, person with a good job*

Descriptive and Possessive Noun Phrases:

There is no formal difference between descriptive and possessive noun phrases. In both, the modified or head noun comes first, and the modifier noun, descriptive or possessive, comes second. For example, /kíé bílé/ means either *tree leaves* or *tree's leaves (or leaves of a tree)*. However, since the likelihood of a particular phrase occurring either as a descriptive phrase or a possessive phrase is often much greater than the likelihood of its occurring as both, many theoretically possible meanings are ruled out. For example, it is difficult to imagine that /tsíd tadá/ could have any meaning besides *my father's animals*, or that /mod məsis/ could have any meaning but *dangerous man.* However, /fə bisíe/, *worker's machete,* could mean either *the machete of a particular worker* or *the type of machete used by workers.*

Descriptive noun phrases and possessive noun phrases may have the same formal structure, as discussed above; however, a descriptive noun phrase meaning *source of, type used by/typical of,* can be translated by an adjective-noun phrase or a possessive phrase, whereas a possessive phrase can be translated by a possessive noun plus head noun or a head noun plus a prepositional phrase with *of.* For example, the usual meaning of /ǹtáŋán/, *European, white man,* is descriptive in /tɔ́g ǹtáŋán/, *metal spoon, European spoon, white man's spoon;* but it could be a possessive and mean *the European's spoon, the spoon of the white man.*

Descriptive noun phrases that mean *made of a material* or *part/ piece of an object* can be translated either as an adjective-noun phrase or a noun plus a prepositional phrase with *of.* For example, /ndá sĪ/ means *mud house* or *house of mud.*

ndá sĪ	*mud house*
ndá ŋgoag	*stone house*
m̀bɛ́ bíyɛ́d	*glass door*
tɔ́g ilé	*wooden spoon*
m̀bɛ́ óŋgóla	*gate (fence door)*
ǹnə́m tébəle	*table top*
ŋ̀kə́l ḿbaŋ	*ivory handle*
fáag bibe	*bamboo comb*
ndá yób	*building with two or more stories*
m̀bɛ́ mətúá	*car/automobile door*
sí ndá	*floor of a house*

abúg áfəb	*edge of the paper*
ikoób ɲag	*cowskin, skin of a cow*

Items like the last one above, /ikób ɲag/, can have several meanings. The meaning could be possessive, *the cow's skin, the skin of a cow;* but it could also be source, i.e. *skin of/from a cow,* or material, *leather, cowskin.*

One has to learn the meaning of source or type descriptive noun phrases just like any vocabulary item. One cannot guess that /inɔŋ bətí/ means *a bed with a wooden frame and raffia caning for lying on.*

tɔ́g ǹtáŋán	*metal spoon*
tɔ́g bətí	*wooden spoon*
mvú ntāŋán	*European-type dog*
mvú bətí	*African-type dog*
inɔŋ ńtāŋán	*bed with mattress*
inɔŋ bə́tí	*bed with raffia caning*

Some descriptive phrases that don't specify source also have to be learned as vocabulary items. /m̀fón/, *free standing*, when combined with /ilé/, *tree*, or a tree name such as /alɛ́n/, *palm tree*, means *a very tall tree whose lower branches have been cut off.* However, the usual translation of a noun phrase like /mimfón məlɛ́n/ is *very tall/ huge palmtrees.*

Possessive-like meanings *having, belonging to, containing, holding*, are expressed as possessives in Ewondo. For example, /mod ndá/, *owner of a house, head of a household,* is very much like the English expression *the man of the house.*

mveé bidí	*pot of food*
ǹlɔmbi mə́ndím	*bottle of water*
ndá bod	*(one's) family*
okəŋ kásiŋ	*kitchen knife*
bóán bətadá	*siblings, cousins*
bóán bətí	*Ewondo children, children of the Ewondo*
ɲɔ́l bōán	*the bodies of the children*

Some descriptive phrases are for the purpose of distinguishing homonyms. A single noun would be used of the context is clear, but the descriptive modifier is used if there is any ambiguity. For example, /kóé/ can mean either *monkey* or *snail*. If /kóé/ is not clear, /kóé ɑfɑn/, *koe of the forest*, i.e. *monkey*, or /kóé dza(l)/, *koe of the village*, i.e. *snail*, can be used to distinguish the homonyms.

Indefinite Noun Modifiers:

Indefinite modifiers precede the noun they modify. /ziŋ/ means *unknown, unspecified, some*.

mod ziŋ	*someone, anyone*
dzóm ziŋ	*something, anything*
ilé ziŋ	*some/any tree*
iyoŋ ziŋ	*some time, any time*
Mod ziŋ akə.	*Somebody is going.*
Zɑɑ́ mə yɛ́n ɑmoós ziŋ.	*Come to see me anytime/one of these days.*

/ízɑɑ/ means *someone else's possession*, but the possessor is unknown or unspecified.

ízɑ̄ɑ́ dzóm	*someone else's thing*
ízɑ̄ɑ́ mɪ̄níŋgɑ́	*someone else's wife*
ízɑ̄ɑ́ kɑ́lɑdɑ	*someone else's book*
ízɑ̄ɑ́ ntóm	*someone else's hat*

Modified nouns can have modifier nouns preceding and following. There are various possible combinations, but the modifiers follow the rules given above. There doesn't seem to be a specified order if there is more than one modifier preceding the head noun. Some modifiers like /ǹtúd/, *full*, can precede or follow without any apparent change of meaning.

mod onoɑ́n afumu	*big white bird*
ivińdi mɑ́n mvú	*little black dog*
bɑ́n bivíndi mvú	*little black dogs*
ǹtúd ádɪ̄d ndə́g	*full heavy box*
ovəvəs ívóé ndə́g	*light empty box*
ǹlɔmbi mə́ndím ńtūd	*bottle full of water*
ǹtúd(í) nlɔmbi mə́ndím	*full bottle of water*

Phrasal Descriptive Possessives: Repetition of Noun-Class Prefixes:

One type of possessive-like descriptives occurs with the noun-class prefix of the modified noun repeated as an independent particle after the modified noun and before the modifier noun. This type of descriptive has the modified noun in the plural even if the meaning is singular. The meaning is *descriptive* or *possessive*.

məfab m(ə) ónoan	*wings of a bird*
mətádí mə́ kálada	*the beginning/front cover of a book*
məman mə kálada	*the end/back cover of a book*
bidí bí ŋgɔ̄gé	*dinner, supper*
bidí bí kídí	*breakfast*
biyé bi sikúlu	*school clothes*
bɔ́ŋgɔ́ bə sikúlu	*school children*
bóán bə́ bətí	*Ewondo children*
tɔ́g mi ńtāŋán	*metal spoon*
ndə́ mə́ ŋkúd	*mental hospital*

Nominalized sentences occur as phrasal descriptive possessives and fill any noun slot in a sentence including the preposition-object slot. The verb of a nominalized sentence becomes the modified or head noun of the phrase, and the subject of the nominalized sentence becomes the modifier noun or a possessive pronoun. The object in a nominalized sentence becomes a modifier noun.

mətádí mə́ mvəŋ	*the start of rain*
məman(á) mə́ mbú	*the end of the year*
məsus m(ə) ólog	*the coming down the ladder*
məkə mə sikúlu mə́é	*his departure for school*
Á mə̄tádí mə́ mbú, mayikal ábɔ̄g.	*At the beginning of the year, I will give (announce) a party.*
Ósúsúú məkə mə́é, aŋgákəyɛ́n ndá bod.	*Before his departure, he went to see his family.*
Á məsu m(ə) olóŋ, aŋgákú ásí akol á búgi.	*(While) coming down the ladder, he fell and broke his leg.*

Colors: Basic and Derived Color Terms:

Ewondo, like Áfrican languages in general, has a basic color scheme of three colors: *black*, *white*, and *red*. Other colors are indicated by names of various things to indicate color, as English does for *orange*. /ɲó(l)/, *body, exterior, form, color,* precedes the object that indicates the color, e.g. /ɲól kpəm/, *green*, i.e. *the color of manioc leaves*. The meaning of the item used as a color referent is given in parentheses in the chart below. Foreign color terms are also occasionally borrowed, e.g. /bulúm/, *blue*.

ɑfum, m̀fum	*white, light gray, dust-colored*
ɑvín, ivíndi	*black, blue, green, dark brown, dark gray, dark-colored*
ɑvié	*red, bright orange, bright yellow, pink*
ɲól kpəm	*green; (manioc leaves)*
ɲól isúg	*light yellow, light orange, light tan; (palmoil mixed with water)*
ɲól məki	*dark red; (blood)*
ɲól mvōád	*gold-colored; (gold, brass)*
ɲól simɛ́n	*light gray, dull silver; (cement)*
ɲól sílba	*bright silver; (silver)*
ɲól kakí	*khaki, dark tan; (khaki)*
ɑ́zoŋ, ɑvié ɑ́zoŋ	*bright red*
iyɛ́t, iyɛ́n	*transparent; (glass, mirror)*
bulúm	*blue; (blue)*
ihɔ́lə	*medium brown, medium orange, light blue*

NUMERALS

Cardinals: Counting Forms

1	fóág	11	awóm e dzíá
2	bɛ	12	awóm e bíbɛ̄
3	lá	13	awóm e bílá
4	ɲi	14	awóm e bíɲi
5	tán	15	awóm e bítán
6	saman	16	awóm e bísaman
7	zamgbá	17	awóm e zamgbá
8	moom	18	awóm e moom
9	ibu	19	awóm e ibu
10	awóom	20	məwóm bɛ̄
21	məwóm bɛ̄ e dzíá	22	məwóm bɛ̄ e bíbɛ̄
30	məwóm (mə)lá	31	məwóm (mə́)lá e dzíá
40	məwóm (mə́)ɲi		
50	məwóm tán		
60	məwóm saman		
70	məwóm zamgbá		
80	məwóm moom		
90	məw íbu, məwóm íbu		
100	ǹtɛd (m̀bóág)	101	ǹtɛd e dzíá
110	ǹtɛd e awóom	111	ǹtɛd e awóom e dzíá
120	ǹtɛd e məwóm bɛ̄		
200	mintɛd míbɛ̄		
300	mintɛd mílá		
400	mintɛd míɲi		
500	mintɛd mítán		

600	mintɛd mísaman
700	mìntɛd zamgbá
800	mintɛd moom
900	mintɛd ibu
1000	àkúda, mintɛd awóom
10,000	məkúda awóom

The above forms are used when counting and not using a noun. If counting people, the forms given above with /dzíá/ would have /m̀bóág/ instead, i.e. to count people /awóm e mbóág/, *eleven*, is used, whereas /awóm e dzia/, *eleven*, is used to count things.

The numerals one through six have inflected forms when following a noun, and these inflections vary according to the noun classes. See the tables given below for a full listing of forms.

The numerals eleven through nineteen have an obsolete form with /fu/, e.g. /fu fóág/, *eleven*. Apparently, when Nekes wrote in 1911 (p.144), these forms were common; but many speakers of Ewondo today have never heard these forms. Also, Nekes lists /akúda/ to mean 10,000 (p.145). No one uses /akúda/ with this meaning today; /akúda/ is now the usual way of saying 1,000, but the old form /mintɛd awóom/, 1,000, is still known. /tóásɛn/, English *thousand*, is also used for 1,000.

Nekes also gives /boŋgá/ for *15*, /itínī, bitínī/ for *20*, and /lɔlɔ́/ for *1,000,000*; but my informant did not know these.

Cardinals: Classes 1 and 2

mod	m̀bóág	*one man/person*	bod	báɲi	*4 men/people*
bod	bəbɛ̀	*2 men/people*	bod	bətān	*5 men/people*
bod	bəlɛ	*3 men/people*	bod	bəsaman	*6 men/people*

Cardinals: Classes 3 and 4

ntáŋənə mbōág	*one European*	mintáŋənə míɲi	*four Europeans*
mintáŋənə mībɛ́	*two Europeans*	mintáŋənə mītán	*five Europeans*
mintáŋənə mīlá	*three Europeans*	mintáŋənə mísaman	*six Europeans*

/ǹtáŋan/ has the form /ǹtáŋənə́/ before another word. Some speakers also have /ǹtáŋnə/ and [ǹtā́ā́nə]. The tilde [˜] means a nasalized vowel.

Cardinals: Classes 5 and 6

aló dá	*one ear*	məló máɲi	*four ears* x
məló mə́bɛ̄	*two ears*	məló mə́tán	*five ears* xx x
məló mə́lá	*three ears*	məló mə́saman	*six ears* xx

Cardinals: Classes 7 and 8

iyé dzíá	*one cloth*	biyé bíɲi	*four cloths* x
biyé bíbɛ̄	*two cloths*	biyé bítán	*five cloths*
biyé bílá	*three cloths*	biyé bísaman	*six cloths*

Cardinals: Classes 9 and 10

mvú dzĪá	*one dog*	mvú íɲi	*four dogs*
mvú íbɛ̄	*two dogs*	mvú ítán	*five dogs*
mvú ílá	*three dogs*	mvú ísaman	*six dogs*

Cardinals: Classes 11 and 5

onoan ḿboag	*one bird*	anoan áɲi	*four birds*
anoan ábɛ	*two birds*	anoan átán	*five birds*
anoan álá	*three birds*	anoan ásaman	*six birds*

Order of Numerals in Inexact Statements:

The order of numerals in inexact statements is the larger number first and the smaller number following, e.g. /bə́lá ŋgə́ ki bə́bɛ̄/ in the sentence below, the order is *three or (if not) two.*

Bod bə́lá ŋgə́ ki bə́bɛ̄ bə́ŋgásɔ́.	*Two or three people came.*

(/ŋgə́ ki/, *if not*, is the usual way of indicating *or.*)

Partitive in the Subject:

A numeral indicating *a part of, some of* the subject occurs after the verb.

Mintómbá myám míŋgáwú míɲi.	*Four of my sheep died.*

ORDINALS

Classes 1 and 2

(é) ɲó osú	*(the) first (one)*	é bə́ bósú	*the first ones*
(é) ɲɔ́ bɛɛ́ɛ	*(the) second (one)*	é bə́ bəbɛ́ɛ	*the second ones*
(é) ɲɔ́ lāla	*(the) third (one)*	é bə́ bəlála	*the third ones*
(é) ɲɔ́ ɲina	*(the) fourth (one)*	é bə́ bəɲina	*the fourth ones*
(é) ɲɔ́ tāna	*(the) fifth (one)*	é bə́ bətána	*the fifth ones*
(é) ɲɔ́ sam(ə)na	*(the) sixth (one)*	é bə́ bəsam(ə)na	*the sixth ones*
(é) ɲɔ́ zamgbála	*(the) seventh (one)*	é bə́ bəzambála	*the seventh ones*
(é) ɲɔ́ momo	*(the) eighth (one)*	é bə́ bəmomo	*the eighth ones*
(é) ɲɔ́ ib(ə)lúu	*(the) ninth (one)*	é bə́ bəb(ə)lúu	*the ninth ones*
(é) ɲɔ́ awómo	*(the) tenth (one)*	é bə́ báwómo	*the tenth ones*
(é) ɲɔ́ áwōm ee mbóá(g)	*(the) eleventh (one)*	é bə́ áwōm ee mbóá(g)	*the eleventh ones*
(é) ɲɔ́ áwōm ee bɛ́ɛ	*(the) twelth (one)*	é bə awōm ee bəbɛ̄	*the twelth ones*
(é) ɲɔ́ məwóm bɛɛ́ɛ	*(the) twentieth (one)*	é bə́ məwóm bɛɛ́ɛ	*the twentieth ones*
(é) ɲɔ́ məwóm bɛɛ́ɛ ee mboa(g)	*(the) twenty-first (one)*	é bə́ məwóm bɛɛ́ɛ ee mbóá(g)	*the twenty-first one*
(é) ɲɔ́ mvūá	*(the) last (one)*	é bə́ bəmvūá	*the last ones*

/é bə́ bósú/, *(all of) the first ones*, often means such things as *(all of) the first row* or *(all of) the first group/bunch*. The plural of succeeding ordinals have similar meanings. /é bə́ bəbɛ́ɛ/ means *(all of) the second ones/row/group/bunch*; however, it also means *every second one*. /é ɲɔ́ bɛɛ́ ōsə́/ also means *the second row/group, bunch*, and *every second one*; but /é bə́ bəbɛ́ɛ/ is the more common form. All ordinals greater than one can mean *every nth one*.

Classes 3 and 4

(é) ví ósú	*(the) first (one)*	é mí mósú	*the first ones*
(é) vi bɛ́ɛ	*(the) second (one)*	é mí míbɛ́ɛ	*the second ones*
(é) ví lála	*(the) third (one)*	é mí míláa	*the third ones*
(é) ví ɲina	*(the) fourth (one)*	é mí míɲina	*the fourth ones*

(é) ví tána	*(the) fifth (one)*	é mí mitána	*the fifth ones*
(é) ví sam(ə)na	*(the) sixth (one)*	mí mísam(ə)na	*the sixth ones*
(é) ví zamgbála	*(the) seventh (one)*	é mí mízamgbála	*the seventh ones*
(é) ví momo	*(the) eighth (one)*	é mí mímomo	*the eighth ones*
(é) ví ib(ə)lúu	*(the) ninth (one)*	é mí míb(ə)lúu	*the ninth ones*
(é) ví áwómo	*(the) tenth (one)*	é mí myáwómo	*the tenth ones*

Note again the meanings of the plurals, e.g. /é mí míláa/, *the third row/group/bunch, every third one.*

Classes 5 and 6

(é) dí ósú	*(the) first (one)*	é mə́ mósú	*the first ones*
(é) dí bέε	*(the) second (one)*	é mə́ məbέε	*the second ones*

The rest of the forms for Classes 5 and 6 are regular, i.e. just like those for Classes 3 and 4, except for the Class 5 and 6 prefixes.

Classes 7 and 8

(é) dzí ósú	*(the) first (one)*	é bí byósú	*the first ones*
(é) dzí bέε	*(the) second (one)*	é bí bíbέε	*the second ones*

The rest of the forms for Classes 7 and 8 are regular.

Classes 9 and 10

(é) ɲí osú	*(the) first (one)*	é ɲí ósú	*the first ones*
(é) ɲí bεέε	*(the) second (one)*	é ɲí bεέε	*the second ones*
(é) ɲí lāla	*(the) third (one)*	é ɲí lála	*the third ones*
(é) ɲí ɲina	*(the) fourth (one)*	é ɲí ɲina	*the fourth ones*
(é) ɲí tāna	*(the) fifth (one)*	é ɲí tána	*the fifth ones*
(é) ɲí sam(ə)na	*(the) sixth (one)*	é ɲí sam(ə)na	*the sixth ones*
(é) ɲí zamgbála	*(the) seventh (one)*	é ɲí zamgbála	*the seventh ones*

(é) ɲí momo	*(the) eighth (one)*	é ɲí momo	*the eighth ones*
(é) ɲí ib(ə)lúu	*(the) ninth (one)*	é ɲí ib(ə)lúu	*the ninth ones*
(é) ɲí awómo	*(the) tenth (one)*	é ɲí áwómo	*the tenth ones*

Classes 11 and 5

(é) ví ósú	*(the) first (one)*	é mə́ mósú	*the first ones*
(é) ví bέε	*(the) second (one)*	é mə́ mə́bέε	*the second ones*

The rest of the forms for Classes 11 and 5 are regular.

PRONOUNS

Independent Pronouns

	singular			plural	
1st pers.	mɑ	*I, me*		biɑ́	*we, us*
2nd pers.	wɑ	*you*		mínɑ	*you*
3rd pers.					
Class 1	ɲé	*he, she, him, her*	Class 2	bɔ́	*they, them*
Class 3	wɔ́	*it*	Class 4	myɑ́	*they, them*
Class 5	dɔ́	*it*	Class 6	mɔ́	*they, them*
Class 7	dzɔ́	*it*	Class 8	byɑ́	*they, them*
Class 9	dzɔ	*it*	Class 10	dzɔ́	*they, them*
Class 11	wɔ́	*it*	Class 5	dɔ́	*they, them*

When another word follows, the first- and second-person pronouns often have reduced forms.

	singular		plural	
1st pers.	mə	*I, me*	bí	*we, us*
2nd pers.	wɔ	*you*	mín	*you*

If there is only a main verb in a sentence, pronoun objects follow the verb. If there are both indirect and direct objects, the indirect objects precede the direct.

Avə́ mə dzɔ. (Cl. 9)	*He gave it to me.*
Avə́ bí dzɔ.	*He gave it to us.*
Avə́ wɔ dzɔ.	*He gave it to you (sg.).*
Avə́ mín dzɔ.	*He gave it to you (pl.).*
Məvə́ ɲe dzɔ.	*I gave it to him.*
Məvə́ bɔ dzɔ.	*I gave it to them.*

Aŋgáku(s) mə dzɔ́.	*He bought it for me.*
Aŋgáku(s) bíí dzɔ́.	*He bought it for us.*
Məŋgɑ́ku(s) wo dzɔ́.	*I bought it for you (sg.).*
Məŋgɑ́ku(s) mínē dzɔ́.	*I bought it for you (pl.).*
Məŋgɑ́ku(s) ɲə́ dzɔ.	*I bought it for him.*
Məŋgɑ́ku(s) bó dzɔ́.	*I bought it for them.*

Akɑd mə soób bīyé.	*He washes clothes for me.*
Akɑd bí soób bīyé.	*He washes clothes for us.*
Akɑd wɔ soób bīyé.	*He washes clothes for you (sg.).*
Akɑd mín(ɔ̄) soób bīyé.	*He washes clothes for you (pl.).*
Akɑd ɲə soób bīyé.	*He washes clothes for him.*
Akɑd bɔ́ soób bīyé.	*He washes clothes for them.*

The fact that the Ewondo indirect object pronouns given above are translated with *to* and *for* in English does not mean they are benefactives. Ewondo does have a benefactive, which is described below.

Benefactive:

A benefactive means *something is done for someone's benefit or on someone's behalf.* This is expressed by /ɑ́sú/. /ɑ́sú/ is a prepositional phrase which means *to/at face/forehead,* but it is also used with a possessive pronoun to form the benefactive.

Aɑ́nɔ́ŋ dzo ɑ́sú dɑmɑ.	*He bought it for me.*
Ayɑ́mɑn bɛlɛ́d ɑ́sú dɑmɑ.	*She baked bread for me.*
Mɑsíé ɑ́sú díé.	*I work for him.*

That /ású/ has the meaning *for, for the purpose/use of* can be seen in the following sentence.

Mimkpɑ́mɑ́ŋ bíyé bínɔ̄ ɑ́sú sikúlu.	*My new clothes are for school.*

Various verbs also occur with the preposition /ee/, *with, and,* to indicate *to or for whom something was done.*

Məə́kūán ee ɲə́ ndzaag.	*I sold him the wood.*
Məsɔ́ ee ɲə́ dzaag.	*I brought him the wood.*
Mayáá ee ɲɔ mɔ́ni.	*I paid him the money.*

There are some indirect object constructions in Ewondo that are obscured in the English translation because in some cases Ewondo uses an indirect object where English uses a possessive pronoun.

Matsíg ɲə isil.	*I am cutting his hair.*
Makeŋ ɲə́ nlɔ̄.	*I am shaving his head.*
Mafáe ɲə́ isil.	*I am combing his hair.*

The first sentence just above literally means *I am cutting him the hair.* Since English cannot use an indirect object here, the translation has to be rephrased as a possessive.

Extended Independent Pronouns:

To lay special emphasis on a pronoun, an expanded independent form is used. Extended independent pronouns occur only in the performs and are formed by prefixing the demonstrative /N-/, i.e. syllabic nasal.

ɲ́ɲée ɲé aábɔyə wó dzé?	*And he, what did he do to you?*

(One informant contracted /ɲ́ɲée ɲé/ to /ɲ́ɲ/.)

Class 1	ɲ́ɲe	Class 2	ḿbɔ
Class 3	ŋ́gɔ	Class 4	ḿmya
Class 5	ńdɔ	Class 6	ḿmɔ
Class 7	ńdzɔ	Class 8	ḿbya
Class 9	ńdzɔ	Class 10	ndzɔ
Class 11	ŋgɔ	Class 12	ńdɔ

Pronoun Objects With /dzam/: Can :

If an auxiliary verb occurs before /dzam/, *can, be able to,* pronoun objects precede /dzam/.

Abə́ ki dzɔ dzaám kom.	*He wasn't able to fix it.*

Distinguishing Third and Fourth Person:

In order to distinguish third and fourth person in the benefactive when using pronouns, /mɛ́n/, *self*, is used to mark the third person if the context is not clear.

Aŋgálad m̀kpámáŋ íyé ású díé.	*She made her (fourth person) a new dress.*
Aŋgálad m̀kpámáŋ íyé ású díé é mɛ̄n.	*She made herself a new dress.*

Demonstrative and Interrogative Pronouns

The demonstrative pronouns and some of the interrogative pronouns also take the noun-class prefixes. /m̀bɔ́ág/, *one*, also has the meaning *other* and occurs with a demonstrative pronoun such as /ɲɔ́/, *this*, e.g. /ɲɔ́ mbɔ́ág/, *the/this other one*. /-fə́/, as in /m̄fə́/, *another (one) like this (one), others like these*, can also mean *which one?, what kind of ?* /-am/, as in /bám/, *how many?*, has no singular.

Classes 1 and 2

é mod ɲɔ́	*this person/man*	é bod bá	*these people/men*
mod m̀fə́	*another person/man*	bod bəfə́	*other people/men*
é mod m̀bɔ́ág	*the other person/man*	é bod bəvɔ́g	*the other people/men*
mod te	*that person/man*	bod bə́tē	*those people/men*
mod ósə	*each/every person/man*	bod bə́sə	*all people/men*
ɲɔ́ mbɔ́ág	*the other (one)*	ba bəvɔ́ág	*the other (ones)*
mod m̀fə́	*which person/man?*	bod bəfé	*which people/men?*
		bod bám	*how many people?*

Classes 3 and 4

ńtáŋənó vī	*this European*	míntáŋənə́ mī	*these Europeans*
ǹtáŋə́nə́ mfə̄	*another European*	mintáŋə́nə́ mīfə́	*other Europeans*
ńtáŋə́nə́ mbɔ̄ág	*the other European*	míntáŋənó mīvóág	*the other Europeans*
ǹtáŋə́nə́ tē	*that European*	mintáŋə́nə́ mítē	*those Europeans*
ǹtáŋə́n(ə́) ósə	*each/every European*	mintáŋə́nə́ mísə̀	*all Europeans*
ví mbɔ̄ág	*the other (one)*	mí mīvóág	*the other (ones)*
ǹtáŋə́nə́ mfə̄	*which European?*	mintáŋə́nə́ mīfə́	*which Europeans?*
		mintáŋənə́ myám	*how many Europeans?*

The initial high tone on /ńtánəŋə́/ and /míntáŋə́nə́/ is from the definite article /é/, i.e. /é ntáŋənə/ goes to /ńtáŋə́nə́/ and /é mintáŋə́nə́/ to /míntáŋə́nə́/.

Classes 5 and 6

ɑ́ló dí	*this ear*	mə́ló mɑ̄	*these ears*
ɑló ɑ́fɔ̄	*another ear*	mə́ló mɔ̄fə́	*other ears*
ɑ́ló ɑ̄vóɑ́g	*the other ear*	mə́ló mɔ̄vóɑ́g	*the other ears*
ɑló tɛ̄	*that ear*	məló mə́tɛ̄	*those ears*
ɑló ɑ́sə	*each/every ear*	məló mə́sə	*all ears*
dí ɑ́vɔ̄ɑ́g	*the other (one)*	mí mɛ̄vóɑ́g	*the other (ones)*
ɑló ɑ́fɔ̄	*which ear?*	məló mɔ̄fə́	*which ears?*
		məló mɑ́m	*how many ears?*

Classes 7 and 8

íyé dzɪ	*this cloth*	bíyé bɪ	*these cloths*
iyé ífɔ̄	*another cloth*	biyé bɪfə́	*other cloths*
íyé ɪvóɑ́g	*the other cloth*	bíyé bɪvóɑ́g	*the other cloths*
iyé tē	*that cloth*	biyé bítē	*those cloths*
iyé ísə	*each/every cloth*	biyé bísə	*all cloths*
dzí ɪvóɑ́g	*the other (one)*	bí bɪvóɑ́g	*the other (ones)*
iyé ífɔ̄	*which cloth?*	biyé bɪfə́	*which cloths?*
		biyé byɑ́m	*how many cloths?*

Classes 9 and 10

é mvú ɲɪ	*this dog*	é mvú ɲɪ	*these dogs*
mvú fə́	*another dog*	mvú fə́	*other dogs*
é mvú fóɑ́g	*the other dog*	é mvú fóɑ́g	*the other dogs*
mvú tɛ̄	*that dog*	mvú tɛ̄	*those dogs*
mvú ísə	*each/every dog*	mvú ísə	*all dogs*
ɲí fóɑ́g	*the other (one)*	ɲí fóɑ́g	*the other (ones)*
mvú fə́	*which dog?*	mvú fə	*which dogs?*
		mvú dzɑ́m	*how many dogs?*

Classes 11 and 5

ónɔ̄án ví	*this bird*	ánɔ̄án	*these birds*
onoan ḿfə̄	*another bird*	anoan áfə̄	*other birds*
onoan ḿbɔ̄ág	*the other bird*	ánɔ̄án ávɔ̄ág	*the other birds*
onoán tē	*that bird*	anoán tē	*those birds*
onoan ósə	*each/every bird*	anoan ásə	*all birds*
ví mbóág	*the other (one)*	dí avóág	*the other (ones)*
onoan ḿfə̄	*which bird?*	anoan áfə̄	*which birds?*
		anoan dám	*how many birds?*

Selection Interrogative: /ˋ-fə́/: Which:

The selection interrogative /ˋ-fə́/ or /ˋ-fé/, *which (one)*, occurs at the beginning or end of a sentence and marks a question. /ˋ-fə́/ takes noun-class prefixes. See the tables above.

Wayi mɔ́ŋgɔ́ mfə̄?	*Which child do you want?*
M̀fé wayi naa ánɔŋ?	*Which one do you want her to take?*

Note that the noun-class prefix for /ˋ-fə́/ has a low-toned prefix, except of courses in Classes 9 and 10 which have no prefix. The influence of this low tone is seen in the mid tone on the final vowel of /ˋ-mfə́/ in many cases. Since syllabic nasals usually lose their syllabicity after a vowel, /mɔ́ŋgɔ́ m̀fə́/ contracts from four to three syllables and becomes /mɔ́ŋgɔ́ mfə̄/.

Person Interrogative: /zá/ or /zə́/:

The person interrogative is /zá/ or /zə́/, *who*, usually occurs at the beginning of a sentence, and marks a question. The plural is /bəzá/ or /bəzə́/.

Zə́ ɲə̄?	*Who is this?*
Zá aŋgábɔ?	*Who did that?*
Zaá (a)bɔ?	*Who did that?*
Wa zá?	*Who's there?*

/zá aŋgábɔ/ contracts to /záŋgābɔ/ except at very slow speed. When preceding a low-toned stem, /zá/ becomes/zaá/, as in /zaá (a)bɔ/.

Object Interrogative: /dzé/: What:

The object/thing interrogative /dzé/, *what*, occurs at various places in a sentence, most often finally, and marks a question.

Dzé dzí?	*What is this?*
É dzóm ítɛ́l(ə́) dzī īne dzé?	*What are these things standing up here?*
Oákād naa ayi dzé?	*What did you say he wanted?*
Onə ŋgoan dzé?	*To what clan do you belong?*

Kind or Type Interrogative: /za/

The kind or type interrogative is /za/, *what kind of, what type of*, and precedes the noun it modifies.

zaá mod(o)?	*what kind of person?* *which person?*
za byɛ́m(o)?	*what type of things?* *which sort of things?*
zaá (a)bogóo?	*which/what time?* *when?*
zaá (a)kyaɛ́ɛ?	*what kind/sort/type?*

Another Person's/Other People's Possessions: /íza/ or /ízə/

Someone else's possession is indicated by /íza/ or /ízə/, which precedes the noun it modifies.

ízə bə́yá(l) bə̄n(ə) á ndá.	*The other people's wives are in the house.*
íza bóán bávoe á nsəŋ.	*Someone else's children are playing outside.*

Note that though some particles have alternate forms with or without an /í-/ prefix, this is not the case with /íza/. /zá/, *who*, and /za/, *what kind of*, are different words.

Possessive Pronouns:

Possessive pronouns follow the noun they modify. Possessive pronouns are marked for the singular and the plural of the thing (or person) possessed, as well as for the singular and plural of the possessor.

mɔ́ŋgɔ́ wɔm	*my child*	bɔ́ŋgɔ́ bám	*my children*
mɔ́ŋgɔ́ wāán	*our child*	bɔ́ŋgɔ́ bán	*our children*

Classes 1 and 2

singular		plural	
wɔm	*my*	bám	*my*
woe	*your* (sg.)	bóe	*your* (sg.)
woé	*his, her, its*	bóe	*his, her, its*
waán, wɔán	*our*	bán	*our*
waán, wɔán	*your* (pl.)	báán	*your* (sg.)
wabán, wɔbán, wɔbɔ́	*their*	bábá(n)	*their*

Classes 3 and 4

singular		plural	
wɔ́m	*my*	myám	*my*
wóe	*your* (sg.)	míe	*your* (sg.)
wóé	*his, her, its*	myé	*his, her, its*
wáán, wɔ́án	*our*	myán	*our*
wáán, wɔ́án	*your* (pl.)	myán	*your* (pl.)
wábán, wɔ́bán, wɔ́bɔ́	*their*	myábá(n)	*their*

Classes 5 and 6

singular		plural	
dám	*my*	mám	*my*
dóe	*your* (sg.)	móe	*your* (sg.)
díé	*his, her, its*	móé	*his, her, its*
dán	*our*	mán	*our*
dáán	*your* (pl.)	máán	*your* (pl.)
dábá(n)	*their*	mábá(n)	*their*

Classes 7 and 8

singular		plural	
dzám	*my*	byám	*my*
dzóe	*your* (sg.)	bíe	*your* (sg.)
dzíé	*his, her, its*	bíé	*his, her, its*
dzán	*our*	byán	*our*
dzáan	*your* (pl.)	byáán	*your* (pl.)
dzábá(n)	*their*	byábá(n)	*their*

Classes 9 and 10

singular		plural	
dzam	*my*	dzám	*my*
dzoe	*your* (sg.)	dzóe	*your* (sg.)
dzié	*his, her, its*	dzíé	*his, her, its*
dzan	*our*	dzán	*our*
dzaán	*your* (pl.)	dzáán	*your* (pl.)
dzabá(n)	*their*	dzábá(n)	*their*

Classes 11 and 5

singular		plural	
wɔ́m	*my*	dɑ́m	*my*
wóe	*your* (sg.)	dóe	*your* (sg.)
wóé	*his, her, its*	díé	*his, her, its*
wɔ́ɑ́n	*our*	dɑ́n	*our*
wɔ́ɑ́n	*your* (sg.)	dɑ́ɑ́n	*your* (sg.)
wɔ́bɑ́(n)	*their*	dɑ́bɑ́(n)	*their*

Absolute Pronouns: /Ń-/ + Pro:

Absolute pronouns are a kind of emphatic or pointer used to highlight or focus in on a particular thing. Absolute pronouns often occur before a verb to emphasize the subject, whereas English would use sentence stress to accomplish the same sort of highlighting. For example,/ilé dzɪ ndzɔ yɑ́kɑdwúm ófumbí/, *This tree, IT bears oranges (.)*, or *THIS tree bears oranges*. In the first and second persons, absolute pronouns have the same form as independent pronouns; but, in the third person, a high-toned homorganic syllabic nasal prefix /Ń-/ occurs with the absolute pronoun, and the pronoun stem has low tone.

Class 1	ɲ́ne	Class 2	ḿbɔ
Class 3	ŋ́gɔ	Class 4	ḿmyɑ
Class 5	ńdɔ	Class 6	ḿmɔ
Class 7	ńdzɔ	Class 8	ḿbyɑ
Class 9	ŋ́gɔ	Class 9	ńdzɔ
Class 11	ŋ́gɔ	Class 5	ńdɔ

(In the sentence given above, /ńdzɔ/ is not marked with a high tone because syllabic nasals lose their tone when preceded by a vowel. The /ń-/ of /ńdzɔ/ forms a single syllable with /dzɪ/, i.e. becomes /ndzɪn/.)

Inclusion and Exclusion in Pronouns:

A form like /biákə/, *we are going*, gives no indication as to who is included in *we* in addition to the speaker. If, for clarity, it is necessary to indicate whether the hearer is included in *we*, Ewondo uses /bí/, *we*, plus /wa/, *you* (sg.), /ɲé/, *he, she*, or other pronouns as appropriate. /bí wa/, literally *we you* (sg.), does not mean *you (sg.) and we*, but it means *you (sg.) and I/we;* and both pronouns precede the verb. The verb has the same verb-subject prefix as when the exact meaning of *we* is not specified.

bí wa biákə	*You (sg.) and I/we are going.*
bí mīnā biákə	*You (pl.) and I/we are going.*
bí ɲē biákə	*He/She and I/we are going.*
bí bɔ̄ biákə	*They and I/we are going.*

Any of the independent pronouns is Classes 3 to 11 given above can occur in the second position after /bí/. All of these have mid tone in this position except Class 9, which has low tone.

Older people use /wɔ́/ instead of /ɲé/ to express *he and I*, i.e. /bí wɔ̄/. /wɔ́/ is Class 3, but it is used to refer to Class 1 nouns by older people.

mín ɲē miákə	*You (sg./pl.) and he/she are going.*
mín bɔ̄ miákə	*You (sg./pl.) and they are going.*
bán ɲē bákə	*He/She and he/she are going.*
bán bɔ̄ bákə	*He/She and they are going.*
bɔ́ bɔ̄ bákə	*They and they are going.*

If *we* include pronouns from all three persons, /ee/, *and, with,* is used before each pronoun.

ee ma ee wa ee ɲé biákə	*You, he, and I are going.*

But, all three persons can be expressed by putting an independent pronoun with /ee/ after a verb.

biák(ə) ee ɲé	*We and he are going.*
biák(ə) ee wɔ	*We and you are going.*

/biák(ə) ee ɲé/ means *You and I and he are going;* /biákə ee wɔ/, *He/She and I and you are going.* The preposition and pronoun follow the verb.

Pronouns of Relative Location:

Classes 1 and 2

é mod ɲɔ́	*this man*	é bod bá	*these men*
é mod ɲɔ́lɔ̄	*that man*	é bod bálā	*those men*
é mod ɲɔ́lí	*that man (there)*	é bod bálí	*those men (there)*

Speakers of English need to take special note of the meaning of these pronouns since Ewondo has a different type of meaning system from that found in English. In English *here, there*, and *yonder*, represent a system of relative distance from the speaker in which *here* means *close to speaker*, *there* means *away from speaker*, and *yonder* means *much further away from speaker*.

In Ewondo the demostrative system refers to location near or not near the speaker and hearer. /ɲɔ́/ means *close to the speaker*, /ɲɔ́lɔ̄/ means *close to the hearer*, and /ɲɔ́lí/ means *away from both speaker and hearer*. There is no implication of relative distance away from the speaker.

It is necessary to use the definite article /é/ to form noun phrases with demonstratives, because without /é/, a noun and a demonstrative form an equational sentence, e.g. /kádá ɲɔ̄/, *This is a crabb (.), Here is a crabb*; but /é kádá ɲɔ̄/ means *this crabb*.

Sometimes the definite article is repeated before the demonstrative, e.g. /é mod é ɲɔ́/, *this man*; but most of the time only the /é/ before the noun is used.

The definite article /é/ and the relational location pronouns occur without a noun.

é ɲɔ́	*this (one)*	é bá	*these (ones)*
é ɲɔ́lɔ̄	*that (one)*	é bálā	*those (ones)*
é ɲɔ́lí	*that (one there)*	é bálí	*those (ones there)*

Forms like /ɲɔ́lɔ̄/ and /bálā/, which have a mid tone on the second syllable when following /é/ or a noun, have a low tone on the second syllable if not following /é/ or a noun.

The main speaker used for this study also uses /é mod ɲɔ́ɲɔ́/, *this other man*; but Nekes makes no mention of a reduplicated form of /ɲɔ́/, and the writer did not observe it during the brief time he had access to other speakers.

Classes 3 and 4

ńtáŋ(ə)n ɲū	*this European*	míntáŋ(ə́)n mī	*these Europeans*
ńtáŋ(ə)n ɲūlú	*that European*	míntáŋ(ə́)n mīlí	*those Europeans*
ńtáŋ(ə́)n ɲūlí	*that European (there)*	míntáŋ(ə́)n mīlíí	*those Europeans (there)*

The high tone on the first syllable of /ńtáŋ(ə)n/ is the definite article, i.e. /é ntáŋ(ə́)n/ contracts to /ńtáŋ(ə́)n/.

An intrusive /ə/ often occurs between two consonants at word boundaries, e.g. between /ńtáŋ(ə́)n/ and /ɲū/. Such intrusive vowels have the same tone as that of the preceding syllable.

For the plural *those there, those away from both speaker and hearer,* some speakers use two high tones, i.e. /míntáŋ(ə́)n mílí/. This difference between speakers also occurs in the other forms below where the main speaker used for this study uses a mid vowel in the first syllable and two high vowels at the end of the word.

Note however that in the pronoun form for *those away from both speaker and hearer* the speaker used for this study uses high tones in both of the last two syllables. The difference described in the paragraph above obtains only when the demonstrative follows a noun.

There are alternate forms in the singular for these demonstratives in Class 3.

ńtáŋ(ə́)n vī/wī	*this European*
ńtáŋ(ə)n vīlí/wīlí	*that European*
ńtáŋ(ə)n vīlíí/wīlíí	*that European (there)*

The pronouns for this class also show the three forms in the singular.

é ɲú, é ví, é wí	*this (one)*	é mí	*these (ones)*
é ɲúlū, é vílī, é wílī	*that (one)*	é mílī	*those (ones)*
é ɲúlí, é vílí, é wílí	*that (one there)*	é mílí	*those (ones there)*

As discussed in the phonology section, the sequence /vi/ has the three pronunciations (or allophones) [vi], [ɦi], and [ži].

Classes 5 and 6

ákōl dī	*this foot*	mə́kōl mā	*these feet*
ákōl dīlí	*that foot*	mə́kōl mālá	*those feet*
ákōl dílí	*that foot (there)*	mə́kōl mālí	*those feet (there)*

The last vowel in /məkōl mālí/ is not lengthened since it is already distinguished from /mə́kōl mālá/ by the quality of the final vowels. The same is true in the pronouns.

í dí	*this (one)*	é má	*these (ones)*
í dílī	*that (one)*	é málā	*those (ones)*
i dílí	*that (one there)*	é málí	*those (ones there)*

Classes 7 and 8

ílé dzī	*this tree*	bílé bī	*these trees*
ílé dzīlí	*that tree*	bílé bīlí	*those trees*
ílé dzílí	*that tree (there)*	bílé bīlíí	*those trees (there)*

The pronoun forms follow the same pattern; but, as shown above, do not have the form with the lengthened vowel.

é dzí	*this (one)*	é bí	*these (ones)*
é dzílī	*that (one)*	é bílī	*those (ones)*
é dzílí	*that (one there)*	é bílí	*those (ones there)*

Classes 9 and 10

é ndá ɲī	*this house*	mə́ndə́ mā	*these houses*
é ndá ɲīlí	*that house*	mə́ndə́ mālá	*those houses*
é ndá ɲílí	*that house (there)*	mə́ndə́ mālí	*those houses (there)*

The vowel in /ndá/, *house*, is often /ə/, and in /é ndá ɲī/ is often /é/, i.e. /é nd é ɲī/. A word-final /ɑ/ often goes to /ə/.
As discussed under Classes 1 and 2, the definite article /é/ may be repeated before the pronoun. If /é/ is repeated, then /é ndá é ɲī/ becomes /é nd é ɲī/, since the /á/ of /ndá/ is elided.

The demonstrative pronouns for these classes are:

é ɲí	*this (one)*	é má	*these (ones)*
é ɲílī	*that (one)*	é málā	*those (ones)*
e ɲílí	*that (one there)*	é málá	*those (ones there)*

Classes 11 and 5

ónōán ɲū	*this bird*	ánōán dī	*these birds*
ónōán ɲūlú	*that bird*	ánōán dīlí	*those birds*
ónōán ɲūlí	*that bird (there)*	ánōán dīlíí	*those birds (there)*

The demonstrative pronouns for these classes are:

é ɲú	*this (one)*	é dí	*these (ones)*
é ɲúlū	*that (one)*	é dílī	*those (ones)*
é ɲúlí	*that (one there)*	é dílí	*those (ones there)*

As in Class 3, forms containing /ɲú/ alternate with /ví/ and /wí/. See the discussion of this under Class 3.

Intensive Particle /ná/:

The intensive particle /ná/, *so, in/to such a degree*, may occur after any of the forms with /ɲɔ́/, e.g. /ńlóŋó ɲɔ́ ná/, *this builder/mechanic right here.*

/ná/ also occurs at the end of sentences with meaning *what (a)!*.

(za) mɔ́ŋgɔ́ ánε̄n ná !	*What a fat child!*

Independent Pronouns With Subjects: Also, Too

When an independent pronoun precedes its verb, it gives the meaning *also, too.*

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	mɑ mɑyikə	*I will go too*		biɑ́ biɑ́yikə	*we will go too*
2nd.pers.	wɑ wɑyikə	*you will go too*		miɑ́ miɑ́yikə	*you will go too*
3rd.pers.					
Class 1	ɲɑ́ ɑyikə	*he/she will go too*	Cl.2	bɑ́ bɑ̄yikə	*they will go too*
Class 3	wɑ́ wɑ̄yikə	*it will go too*	Cl.4	myɑ́ myɑ̄yikə	*they will go too*
Class 5	dɑ́ lɑ̄yikə	*it will go too*	Cl.6	mɑ́ mɑ̄yikə	*they will go too*
Class 7	dzɑ́ yɑ̄yikə	*it will go too*	Cl.8	byɑ́ byɑ̄yikə	*they will go too*
Class 9	dzɑ yɑyikə	*it will go too*	Cl.10	dzɑ́ lɑ̄yikə	*they will go too*
Class 11	wɑ́ wɑ̄yikə	*it will go too*	Cl.5	dɑ́ lɑyikə	*they will go too*

The /e/ of /ɲé/ in Class 1 assimilates to /ɑ́/ before /ɑyikə/, but /ɲé/ remains /ɲé/ before /eekə/. In Classes 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 11, the /ɔ/ of these pronouns may remain /ɔ/ or may assimilate to /ɑ/ before a verb form containing /ɑyi/. If /ee/, the contraction of /ɑyi/, occurs, the assimilation of /ɔ/ to /ɑ/ does not take place.

Emphatic Pronouns: /mɛ́n/ and /bɛ́n/:

An emphatic noun or pronoun is indicated by adding /mɛ́n/, *self*, or /bɛ́n/, *selves*, after a noun or pronoun.

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	mɑɑ́ mɛ̄n	*I myself*		bí bə̄bɛ̄n	*we ourselves*
2nd.pers.	wɑɑ́ mɛ̄n	*you yourself*		mín bə̌bɛ̄n	*you yourselves*
3rd.pers.					
Class 1	(ɲ)é mɛ̄n	*he himself, she herself*	Cl.2	(bó) bə́bɛ̄n	*they themselves*
Class 3	óbɛ̄n, bɛ́n	*it itself*	Cl.4	míbɛ̄n	*they themselves*
Class 5	ɑ́bɛ̄n, bɛ́n	*it itself*	Cl.6	mə́bɛ̄n	*they themselves*
Class 7	íbɛ̄n, bɛ́n	*it itself*	Cl.8	bíbɛ̄n	*they themselves*

Class 9	íbɛ̄n, bɛ́n	*it itself*	Cl.10	íbɛ̄n, bɛ́n	*they themselves*
Class 11	óbɛn, bɛ́n	*it itself*	Cl.5	ábɛ̄n, bɛ́n	*they themselves*

maɑ́ mɛ̄n mɑyikə	*I will go myself.*
mod ee mvú bóbɛ̄n bə́ŋgɑ́wú	*The man and the dog died themselves.*
məŋgɑ́və́ dzɔ miníŋgɑ́ émɛ̄n	*I gave it to the woman herself.*
məŋgɑ́yɛ́n mod émɛ̄n	*I saw the man himself.*

The main informant used for the study had a strong preference for the longer emphatic forms, but other speakers have a strong preference for the shorter emphatic forms. Until doing more research in Cameroon, the writer cannot say whether the shorter or longer forms are more common.

With /dzom/, *bundle*, and a few other Class 5 words, /óbɛ̄n/ or /bɛ́n/ is used as the emphatic pronoun.

Reciprocal:

The reciprocal is formed by repetition of an independent pronoun.

1st.pers.	bí bɪ̄ɑ	*we each other/one another*
2nd.pers.	mín mɪ̄nɑ̄	*you each other/one another*
3rd.pers.	bɔ́ bɔ̄	*they each other/one another*

bɔɔ́ bɔ̄ bɑyídɑn	*They are hitting each other.*
mínɔ̄ mín kɑbə́gɑ̄n	*Share it among yourselves.*

Note the /-ɑn/ reciprocal ending on the verbs. See also the section on this suffix.

Reflexive: /ɲól/:

The reflexive is formed by adding /ɲó(l)/, *body*, as the object of a verb, e.g. /ɑwó ɲól dzie/, *He killed himself.*

VERBS

Ewondo, like Bantu languages in general, has a very extensive verb system. There are several tenses and a number of other forms for verbs; however, some verbs do not occur in all forms. The verb system makes extensive use of both inflections and auxiliaries. There is also a large amount of suppletion, i.e. change of stem, in various verb forms, especially in the locative-stative verbs, e.g. /mənə/, *I am*, and /məsí ki/, *I am not*.

There are two basic types of verbs in Ewondo: action verbs and locative-stative verbs. Action verbs indicate that *an action takes place*, and locative-stative verbs indicate that *a state or condition exists*. For example, /mɑdí/, *I am eating*, is an action verb; and /mənə/, *I am (here/there)*, is a locative-stative verb. Some locative-stative verbs can become action verbs by suffixation, e.g. (locative-stative) /mətoɑ́ ɑ́sí/, *I am seated, I am in a sitting position, I am sitting down;* and (action) /mɑtɔb(ɔ) ɑ́sí/, *I am setting myself down, I am getting into a sitting position, I am going to sit down right away, I am sitting down.* (/ɑ́sí/, *down, on the floor/ground*, is nearly always added if the meaning is *sit(ting)* since /toɑ́/ and /tɔbɔ/ also mean *live, dwell, stay, be found/located at.*) For details on forming action verbs from locative-stative verbs, see the section on verb-stem formation.

From the point of view of semantics, some verbs that are action verbs in Ewondo may not appear to be so, at least to a speaker of European language like English. For example, /mɑdiŋ/, *I love*, /mɑliŋɑn/, *I am angry*, and /mɑkoɑn/, *I am sick*, are classed as action verbs since they indicate *a change of state*, because *change of state or condition* is considered action in Ewondo. One can thus see that /mɑdiŋ/ means *I have come to love, therefore, I love*, and /mɑliŋɑn/ means *I have become angry, therefore, I am angry.*

The locative-stative verbs refer to the present or any time in the past. For the future of a locative-stative verb, an action verb derived from the stem of the locative-stative verb is used. This is no doubt due to the fact that the future has not yet come to pass. Consequently, a locative-stative verb could not be used to express something that has never been. For example, /mɑyitɔbɔ/, *I will be*, really means *I will come/get to be*. (/tɔbɔ/ can of course also have its other meanings in the future.)

A verb may have a simple or a derived stem. A simple stem is the basic lexical-meaning-bearing unit described in the section on general stem and word formation. A derived stem is formed by adding various suffixes to the simple stem which alter the meaning of the stem. Such meaning changes as *intransitive to transitive, transitive to intransitive, intransitive to medio-passive, do intensely, do thoroughly, do repeatedly, reciprocal,* and *distributive* are meanings added by derivative suffixes. A derived verb takes the same affixes for subject, tense, and probability as a simple verb stem.

Present: Indicative:

The present refers to *something happening or a condition existing at the present moment of speaking or at a time including the present moment of speaking.* The action verbs have the prefix /a-/ preceding the verb stem. This /a-/ is the Class 5 prefix, i.e. the present of action verbs is formed with the verbal noun /adí/, *eating.* /madí/ is derived from /mə + adí/, literally, *I eating;* but this has become a verb form and means *I am eating.* (As shown in the section on phonology, /ə/ regularly elides when adjacent to another vowel.) Locative-stative verbs have only the verb-subject prefix when referring to a present, but may also have a past prefix if a specific time is referred to, e.g. /mənə/, *I am (here/there),* is literally, *I be (here/there).*

Verbs of perception, which usually occur in the simple present in English, are action verbs in Ewondo, e.g. /mayɛ́n/, *I see,* since perception is regarded as action in Ewondo.

Present: Action Verb: High-Toned Stem: With /a-/ Prefix: *Be Eating:*

	singular		plural		
1st. pers.	madí	*I am eating*		biádī	*we are eating*
2nd. pers.	wadí	*you are eating*		miádī	*you are eating*
3rd. pers.					
Cl. 1	adí	*he/she is eating*	Cl. 2	bádī	*they are eating*
Cl. 3	wádī	*it is eating*	Cl. 4	myádī	*they are eating*
Cl. 5	ládī	*it is eating*	Cl. 6	mádī	*they are eating*
Cl. 7	yádī	*it is eating*	Cl. 8	byádī	*they are eating*
Cl. 9	yadí	*it is eating*	Cl. 10	yádī	*they are eating*
Cl. 11	wádī	*it is eating*	Cl. 5	ládī	*they are eating*

Note the mid tone on the stem vowel after a high-toned prefix, e.g. Class 2. The class prefix /b-́/ carries a high tone, which becomes the tone of the first vowel; but the low tone of the /a-/ prefix cannot be lost---it just "slips over" onto the next syllable and lowers the high tone of the stem to a mid.

/bə́-/ + /a-/ + /dí/ → /bádī/, *they are eating.*

Sex gender is not marked in the third-person-singular-subject verb prefixes. Any of the third-person singulars could translate *he, she,* or *it*; but Class 1 usually translates *he* or *she*, and the other classes usually translate *it*, since Class 1 contains mostly nouns referring to persons and the other classes contain mostly nouns referring to non-persons. See the discussion on noun classes, especially on Classes 1 and 3.

Present: Action Verb: Low-Toned Stem: Be Going: Be En Route:

	singular			plural	
1st. pers.	makə	*I am going*		biákə	*we are going*
2nd. pers.	[illegible]akə	*you are going*		miákə	*you are going*
3rd. pers.					
Cl. 1	akə	*he/she is going*	Cl. 2	bákə	*they are going*
Cl. 3	wákə	*it is going*	Cl. 4	myákə	*they are going*
Cl. 5	lákə	*it is going*	Cl. 6	mákə	*they are going*
Cl. 7	yákə	*it is going*	Cl. 8	byákə	*they are going*
Cl. 9	yakə	*it is going*	Cl. 10	yákə	*they are going*
Cl. 11	wák	*it is going*	Cl. 5	lákə	*they are going*

Present: Locative-Stative Verb: Low-Toned Stem: Be (Here/There):

	singular			plural	
1st. pers.	mənə	*I am*		biínə	*we are*
2nd. pers.	onə	*you are*		miínə	*you are*
3rd. pers.					
Cl. 1	anə	*he/she is*	Cl. 2	bə́nə	*they are*
Cl. 3	ónə	*it is*	Cl. 4	mínə	*they are*
Cl. 5	ánə	*it is*	Cl. 6	mə́nə	*they are*
Cl. 7	ínə	*it is*	Cl. 8	bínə	*they are*
Cl. 9	inə	*it is*	Cl. 10	ínə	*they are*
Cl. 11	ónə	*it is*	Cl. 5	ánə	*they are*

Present: Locative-Stative Verb: High-Toned Stem: Be Lying Down:

	singular			plural	
1st. pers.	məbúo	*I am lying down*		bibúo	*we are lying down*
2nd. pers.	obúo	*you are lying down*		mibúo	*you are lying down*
3rd. pers.					
Cl. 1	abúo	*he/she is lying down*	Cl. 2	bə́búo	*they are lying down*
Cl. 3	íbúo	*it is lying down*	Cl. 4	míbúo	*they are lying down*
Cl. 5	ábúo	*it is lying down*	Cl. 6	mə́búo	*they are lying down*
Cl. 7	íbúo	*it is lying down*	Cl. 8	bíbúo	*they are lying down*
Cl. 9	ibúo	*it is lying down*	Cl. 10	íbúo	*they are lying down*
Cl. 11	óbúo	*it is lying down*	Cl. 5	ábúo	*they are lying down*

/məbúo/ means *I am lying in a prone position.* /məbómbo/ means *I am getting down into a prone position, I am lying down.*

If the first syllable of a verb stem is high, it doesn't matter in the present what tone the second syllable of the verb stem has since no tone changes are involved.

Present: Locative-Stative Verb: Low-High-Toned Stem: Be Sitting

	singular			plural	
1st. pers.	mətoá	*I am sitting*		biítōá	*we are sitting*
2nd. pers.	otoá	*you are sitting*		miítōá	*you are sitting*
3rd. pers.					
Cl. 1	atoá	*he/she is sitting*	Cl. 2	bə́tōá	*they are sitting*
Cl. 3	ótōá	*it is sitting*	Cl. 4	mítōá	*they are sitting*
Cl. 5	átōá	*it is sitting*	Cl. 6	mətōá	*they are sitting*
Cl. 7	ítōá	*it is sitting*	Cl. 8	bítōá	*they are sitting*
Cl. 9	itoá	*it is sitting*	Cl. 10	ítōá	*they are sitting*
Cl. 11	ótōá	*it is sitting*	Cl. 5	átōá	*they are sitting*

Present: Locative-Stative Verb: Low-High-Toned Stem: Have: Own, Possess:

	singular			plural	
1st. pers.	məbələ́	*I have*		biíbə̄lə́	*we have*
2nd. pers.	obələ́	*you have*		miíbə̄lə́	*you have*
3rd. pers.					
Cl. 1	ɑbələ́	*he/she has*	Cl. 2	bə́bə̄lə́	*they have*
Cl. 3	óbə̄lə́	*it has*	Cl. 4	míbə̄lə́	*they have*
Cl. 5	ɑ́bə̄lə́	*it has*	Cl. 6	mə́bə̄lə́	*they have*
Cl. 7	íbə̄lə́	*it has*	Cl. 8	bíbə̄lə́	*they have*
Cl. 9	ibələ́	*it has*	Cl. 10	íbə̄lə́	*they have*
Cl. 11	óbə̄lə́	*it has*	Cl. 5	ɑ́bə̄lə́	*they have*

Note the raising of the low tone between two highs to a mid tone. Some speakers have a low tone on this syllable; others have a mid.

Present: Action Verb: Low-Toned Stem: Be Getting Seated

1st.pers.	mɑtɔbɔ	*I am sitting down*		biɑ́tɔbɔ	*we are sitting down*
2nd.pers.	wɑtɔbɔ	*you are sitting down*		miɑ́tɔbɔ	*you are sitting down*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	ɑtɔbɔ	*he/she is sitting down*	Cl.2	bɑ́tɔbɔ	*they are sitting down*
Cl.3	wɑ́tɔbɔ	*it is sitting down*	Cl.4	myɑ́tɔbɔ	*they are sitting down*
Cl.5	lɑ́tɔbɔ	*it is sitting down*	Cl.6	mɑ́tɔbɔ	*they are sitting down*
Cl.7	yɑ́tɔbɔ	*it is sitting down*	Cl.8	byɑ́tɔbɔ	*they are sitting down*
Cl.9	yɑtɔbɔ	*it is sitting down*	Cl.10	yɑ́tɔbɔ	*they are sitting down*
Cl.11	wɑ́tɔbɔ	*it is sitting down*	Cl.5	lɑ́tɔbɔ	*they are sitting down*

See the note in the second paragraph at the beginning of the section on verbs for the differences between /mətoɑ́/ and /mɑtɔbɔ/ and the use of /ɑ́sí/ with these verbs.

Some Additional Locative-Stative Verbs:

mətə́le	*I am standing up/still*	mətála	*I am alive*
məvəə́	*I am awake/alive/active*	mətií	*I am tied/attached to*

For some speakers, /kə/, *go, leave,* is a locative-stative verb.

Some Additional Action Verbs:

mabɔ	*I am doing/making*	mabi	*I am catching/holding*
makoe	*I am setting on fire*	malad	*I am sewing*
matag	*I am happy*	makus	*I am buying*
madzó	*I am saying/telling*	matsúg	*I am stamping my feet*
mawóé	*I am killing*	mawú	*I am dying*
makúí	*I am going out*	malób	*I am biting*
mafa(g)	*I am digging*	malúg	*I am getting married*
malíg	*I am leaving behind/ abandoning*	mawóg	*I feel/hear/perceive*
mawoe	*I am laughing*	malugu	*I am praising*
mayaɛ	*I am scratching*	madii	*I am closing*
mawulu	*I am walking/running*	makələ	*I am hanging (up)*
makole	*I am lending/borrowing*	mabədə	*I am laying on top of*
mabəgə	*I am carrying/wearing*	makɔbɔ	*I am speaking/talking*
malígi	*I am staying (behind)*	makúli	*I am taking off/out*
matə́lə	*I am standing something up*	mayáɛ	*I am opening*
masíli	*I am asking*	madígi	*I am burning something*
madiŋ	*I love*	manɔŋ	*I am taking*
mafɛn	*I am plaiting*	mabum	*I am roasting*
maláŋ	*I am counting/reading*	mayáŋ	*I am frying*
mayɛ́n	*I see*	mayám	*I am cooking*
matimi	*I am explaining*	mandami	*I am spreading out*
madími	*I am mistaken/making a mistake*	maliŋan	*I am angry*

Negatives of Verbs

Negative verbs are marked by the particle /ki(g)/, *not*, changes of tone, sometimes suppletion of the verb stem, and occasionally other grammatical processes. The final consonant of /ki(g)/ seldom occurs. /ki(g)/ occurs after the main verb if there is no auxiliary verb preceding the main verb, e.g. /mɑɑ́dĪ ki/, *I am not eating*.

Present Negative:

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	mɑɑ́dĪ ki	*I am not eating*		biɑ́dĪ ki	*we are not eating*
2nd.pers.	wɑɑ́dĪ ki	*you are not eating*		miɑ́dĪ ki	*you are not eating*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	ɑɑ́dĪ ki	*he/she is not eating*	Cl.2	bɑ́dĪ ki	*they are not eating*
Cl.3	wɑɑ́dĪ ki	*it is not eating*	Cl.4	myɑ́dĪ ki	*they are not eating*
Cl.5	lɑ́dĪ ki	*it is not eating*	Cl.6	mɑ́dĪ ki	*they are not eating*
Cl.7	yɑ́dĪ ki	*it is not eating*	Cl.8	byɑ́dĪ ki	*they are not eating*
Cl.9	yɑɑ́dĪ ki	*it is not eating*	Cl.10	yɑ́dĪ ki	*they are not eating*
Cl.11	wɑ́dĪ ki	*it is not eating*	Cl.5	lɑ́dĪ ki	*they are not eating*

Present Negative of /nə/:

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	məsí ki	*I am not*		bisí ki	*we are not*
2nd.pers.	osí ki	*you are not*		misí ki	*you are not*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	ɑsí ki	*he/she is not*	Cl.2	bə́sí ki	*they are not*
Cl.3	ósí ki	*it is not*	Cl.4	mísí ki	*they are not*
Cl.5	ɑ́sí ki	*it is not*	Cl.6	mə́sí ki	*they are not*
Cl.7	ísí ki	*it is not*	Cl.8	bísí ki	*they are not*
Cl.9	isí ki	*it is not*	Cl.10	ísí ki	*they are not*
Cl.11	ósí ki	*it is not*	Cl.5	ɑ́sí ki	*they are not*

Present Negative of /bələ́/: Low-High Stem

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	məə́bə̄l(ə́) ki	*I don't have*		biábə̄l(ə́) ki	*we don't have*
2nd.pers.	waábə̄l(ə́) ki	*you don't have*		miábə̄l(ə́) ki	*you don't have*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	aábə̄l(ə́) ki	*he/she does not have*	Cl.2	bábə̄l(ə́) ki	*they don't have*
Cl.3	wábə̄l(ə́) ki	*it doesn't have*	Cl.4	myábə̄l(ə́) ki	*they don't have*
Cl.5	lábə̄l(ə́) ki	*it doesn't have*	Cl.6	mábə̄l(ə́) ki	*they don't have*
Cl.7	yábə̄l(ə́) ki	*it doesn't have*	Cl.8	byábə̄l(ə́) ki	*they don't have*
Cl.9	yaábə̄l(ə́) ki	*it doesn't have*	Cl.10	yábə̄l(ə) ki	*they don't have*
Cl.11	wábə̄l(ə́) ki	*it doesn't have*	Cl.5	lábə̄l(ə́) ki	*they don't have*

The final /ə/ of the stem is usually dropped in speaking. Note that the first /ə/, which is low toned, is raised to mid between the two high tones. The mid tone remains even when the final high is dropped. Some speakers in Yaoundé have /ɛ/ as the first vowel in the present negative of /bələ́/, e.g. /məə́bɛ̄l(ə́) ki/.

Present Negative of /tɔbɔ/:

The present negative of /tɔbɔ/ is /məə́tɔ̄ ki (ásí)/, etc., *I am not sitting down*, etc.

Present Negative of /bóo/:

The present negative of /bóo/ is /məə́bɔ̄ ki/, etc., *I am not lying down.*

Meaning of Verb-Subject Prefixes

As shown above, there is a verb-subject prefix which co-occurs with noun subjects of each noun class. However, this is not just a case of automatic grammatical co-occurrence. In the huge majority of cases, nouns do occur with the verb-subject prefix of their own class; but nouns do occur with the verb-subject prefixes of other classes. When this happens, there is a change of meaning.

ǹlúu ɑkə.	*The blacksmith is going.*
ǹlúi wɑ́kə.	*The blacksmith is going/to go.*
ǹlúu ɑlə́dbɑ́n.	*The blacksmith is being taken/driven.*

/ǹlúi/, *blacksmith*, is a Class 1 agent noun derived from /lũi/, *work metal, do blacksmithing*. Consequently, /ǹlũi/ takes the Class 1 verb-subject prefix /ɑ-/. By using the /ɑ-/ prefix, the speaker is saying that *the blacksmith is going/leaving under his own power, such as walking, riding a bicycle, or driving an automobile.* It could mean that the blacksmith is a passenger in an automobile; but if it does, it means that *the blacksmith is in some sense participating in the going along or the accompaying of the driver.*

If the Class 3 prefix /wɑ́-/ is used, it could mean that *the blacksmith is being taken/ridden*; but this is unlikely since /lə́d/, *lead, guide, transport, take*, would probably be used, as in /ǹlúu ɑlə́dbɑ́n/, *the blacksmith is being taken/ridden/transported.* This would be quite clear since /lə́d/ means *transport humans*. If the /wɑ́-/ prefix is used, one begins to suspect that the blacksmith isn't human, but probably is a statue or picture. In this case, /ǹlúi wɑ́kə/ would mean *the blacksmith is to be taken/transported, is to be placed (somewhere)*, or *is being taken/transported.* If the blacksmith were a person who was crippled and had to be carried about or pushed about in a wheelchair, /ǹlúi wɑ́kə/ would mean *the blacksmith is to be taken/transported/placed (somewhere).* /ǹlúi wɑ́kə hɑ́/, *the blacksmith goes here, is to go here, is to be placed here*, could also be used to indicate the place where the blacksmith was supposed to sit at a meeting, reception, or banquet. Thus, it can be seen that the /wɑ-/ prefix can mean something like *subject of verb undergoes action of the verb.*

In discussing the verb-subject prefix for Class 3 in the section on this noun class, it was noted that Class 3 nouns that refer to persons, such as /ŋ̀kúkúmɑ́/, *chief, important person*, occur much more often with the Class 1 verb-subject prefix than with the Class 3 verb-subject prefix. No doubt the meaning of the Class 3 verb-subject prefix is the main reason for this shift.

In the unlikely event that an inanimate object were to move under its own power, the Class 1 /ɑ-/ verb-subject prefix would be used for this. For example, if one were watching a cartoon at the movies or on television and one saw a man's suit get up and run off without being on a person, one would probably say /m̀bóɑ́d ɑkə/, *the suit is going/leaving (under its own power)*; but /m̀bóɑ́d/, *suit*, is a Class 3 noun and would nearly always occur with the /wa-/ prefix, as in /m̀bóód wákə/, *the suit is going, being shipped/taken, is to go/be placed at.*

There is also the problem of what plural verb-subject prefix to use if there are two subjects of a verb when the two subjects belong to different noun classes. In most cases, if the meaning is *subject undergoes action of verb*, the Class 8 /by-/ prefix is used. In most cases, if the meaning is *subject is to be put/placed at*, the Class 4 /my-/ prefix is used.

m̀bóód ee okəŋ byákə	*The suit and the knife are going/being shipped/ taken.*
m̀bóód ee okəŋ myákə	*The suit and the knife are to go/be placed/put.*

In most cases, if one of the nouns is in Class 5 and the meaning is *to go/be placed/put at*, the Class 5 /lá-/ prefix is used.

dzoóm ee akəŋ byákə	*The bundle and the knives are being shipped/taken/ transported.*
dzoóm ee akəŋ lákə	*The bundles and the knives are to go/be placed/ put at.*

Prepositional-phrase and locative-noun subjects and Class 11 verb-subject prefixes are used to express a meaning similar to that described by Class 8 just above.

á ndá wákə bitɔ	*Furniture is being put into the house.*
bitɔ byák(ə) a ndá	*The furniture is to go/be put into the house.* *The furniture is being sent/shipped to the house.*
vóm wákə ndá	*A house is going/being built there.*
ndá yák(ə) alí	*The/A house is going/being shipped there.*

Sentences like /á ndá wákə bitɔ/, *Furniture is being put into the house(.)*, and /vóm wákə ndá/, *A house is being built there (.)*, pose problems in grammatical analysis. If /á ndá/, *in(to) the house*, and /vóm/, *there, that place*, are the *grammatical subjects* of these sentences, then the verb-subject prefixes would be the Class 11 prefix /wa-/, and /wa-/ does occur as the verb-subject prefix. However, /wa-/ is also the verb-subject prefix for Class 3; and /wá-/, as discussed above, is also used as the verb-subject prefix occurring with nouns other than those in Class 3 to mean *subject undergoes action of verb*. If /bitɔ/ (Class 7), *furniture*, and /ndá/ (Class 9), *house, building*, are the grammatical subjects and the meaning is *subject undergoes the action of the verb*, then the Class 3 /wa-/ verb-subject prefix would occur. Which is the correct analysis?

To solve this, we should look at the meaning as well as at the structure. /á ndá wákə bitɔ/ means, *Into the house is where the furniture is going*; and /vóm wákə ndá/ means, *That place is where the house is going*. Consequently, /á ndá/ and /vóm/ are the grammatical subjects of the sentence. See the discussion of locative subjects in the section on noun Class 11 for more details on this type of structure.

Also, the order of the wording in these sentences cannot be reversed without changing the verb-subject prefix, which further confirms that /ɑ́ ndɑ́/ and /vóm/ are the grammatical subjects of the sentences.

The fact that the translations given for these sentences above do not sound very good in English is not relevant. More accurate translations, i.e. translations which speakers of English would use to describe the same or similar situations or events, are given in the table above. /ɑ́ ndɑ́ wɑ́kə bitɔ/ was used to describe an occasion when someone was observed moving furniture into a house. Thus, *(The) Furniture is being put/taken/moved into the house (.)*, is an appropriate translation. /bitɔ byɑ́k(ə) ɑ ndɑ́/ is used to explain *what is to be done with or to happen to the furniture*. Thus, an appropriate translation is *The furniture is to go/be put into or is being sent/shipped to the house.*

/vóm wɑ́kɔ ndɑ́/ was used to explain to the writer why some men were digging in the earth beside a street. Thus, an appropriate translation is *A house is going (in)/being built there.* /ndɑ́ yɑ́k(ə) ɑlí/ was used to explain that an unusual event had taken place, a prefabricated house had been shipped from overseas. Thus, *The/A house is going/being shipped/sent there*, is the meaning.

See also the discussion of independent pronoun verb subjects.

Hodiernate Past

The hodiernate past means *earlier today*. Because of contact with European culture, *today* has changed meaning. In traditional Ewondo culture, a day ends and a new day begins at sunset. This is still the usage of older people; but, for younger people, a day ends and begins at midnight. Consequently, for older people, *earlier today* means *anytime since the previous sunset*; but, for younger people, it means *anytime since midnight*. Note that *earlier today* does not usually occur in the translation.

Even though the meaning of the hodiernate past is as just described above, a speaker will occasionally use the hodiernate past to refer to two or three or a few more days ago if the meaning is *very recently* or *just a short time ago*. To express the meanings *I ate some good shrimp very recently (.)*, or *I have just returned from Paris (.)*, one might use the hodiernate past even though the time referred to might be yesterday, the day before yesterday, or even a little longer ago.

Hodiernate Past: Earlier Today

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	mədí	*I ate*		bidí	*we ate*
2nd.pers.	odí, wɑdí, wodí	*you ate*		midí	*you ate*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	ɑdí	*he/she ate*	Cl.2	bə́dí	*they ate*
Cl.3	ódí, wódí	*it ate*	Cl.4	mídí	*they ate*
Cl.5	ɑ́dí	*it ate*	Cl.6	mə́dí, mɑ́dí	*they ate*
Cl.7	ídí	*it ate*	Cl.8	bídí	*they ate*
Cl.9	idí	*it ate*	Cl.10	ídí	*they ate*
Cl.11	ódí, wɑ́dí	*it ate*	Cl.5	ɑ́dí	*they ate*

Note the variation between forms with /ɑ-/ and other forms.

Recent Past:

The recent past usually refers to anytime from *yesterday to a month ago*. Though this is true, the recent past may occasionally be used to refer to up to several months ago; but the meaning is still *recently*. For example, the recent past might be used to express *I bought a new car recently (.)* or *I got married recently (.)* even though a few months have elapsed.

Recent Past:

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	maádī	*I ate*		biádī	*we ate*
2nd.pers.	aádī	*you ate*		miádī	*we ate*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	aádī	*he/she ate*	Cl.2	bádí	*they ate*
Cl.3	wádí	*it ate*	Cl.4	myádí	*they ate*
Cl.5	ládí	*it ate*	Cl.6	mádí, mədí	*they ate*
Cl.7	yádí	*it ate*	Cl.8	byádí	*they ate*
Cl.9	yaádī	*it ate*	Cl.10	yádí	*they ate*
Cl.11	wádí	*it ate*	Cl.5	ládí	*they ate*

Remote Past

The remote past refers to *more than a month ago*, i.e. *not recently*.

Remote Past:

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	məŋgádí, maŋgádí	*I ate*		biŋgádí	*we ate*
2nd.pers.	oŋgádí, waŋgádí	*you ate*		miŋgádí	*you ate*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	aŋgádí	*he/she ate*	Cl.2	bə́ŋgádí	*they ate*
Cl.3	óŋgádí	*it ate*	Cl.4	míŋgádí	*they ate*
Cl.5	áŋgádí	*it ate*	Cl.6	mə́ŋgádí, máŋgádí	*they ate*
Cl.7	íŋgádí	*it ate*	Cl.8	bíŋgádí	*they ate*
Cl.9	iŋgádí	*it ate*	Cl.10	íŋgádí	*they ate*
Cl.11	óŋgádí	*it ate*	Cl.5	áŋgádí	*they ate*

Past Negative

There is no distinction between the hodiernate past, the recent past, and the remote past of the non-locative-stative verbs in the negative. One set of past negative forms serves for the negative of all three.

If there is an auxiliary verb, /ki(g)/ occurs between the auxiliary and the main verb, e.g. /mɑndzí ki dí/, *I didn't eat.*

Past Negative:

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	mɑndzí ki dí	*I didn't eat*		bindzí ki dí	*we didn't eat*
2nd.pers.	ondzí ki dí	*you didn't eat*		mindzí ki dí	*you didn't eat*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	ɑndzí ki dí	*he/she didn't eat*	Cl.2	bəndzí ki dí	*they didn't eat*
Cl.3	óndzí ki dí	*it didn't eat*	Cl.4	míndzí ki dí	*they didn't eat*
Cl.5	ɑ́ndzí ki dí	*it didn't eat*	Cl.6	mə́ndzí ki dí	*they didn't eat*
Cl.7	índzí ki dí	*it didn't eat*	Cl.8	bíndzí ki dí	*they didn't eat*
Cl.9	indzí ki dí	*it didn't eat*	Cl.10	índzí ki dí	*they didn't eat*
Cl.11	óndzí ki dí	*it didn't eat*	Cl.5	ɑ́ndzi ki dí	*they didn't eat*

/ndzí/ is an old verb meaning *know*, which has become an auxiliary for the past negative. The informant used in the study no longer uses /ndzí/ as an independent stem and uses it only as an auxiliary verb.

There are alternate forms for some of the past negative verbs. In the first-person singular, there is also /məndzí ki dí/; in the second-person singular, /wɑndzí ki dí/ and /wondzí ki dí/; in Class 3, /wɑ́ndzí ki dí/; in Class 6, /mɑ́ndzí ki dí/; and in Class 11, /wɑ́ndzí ki dí/.

The informant used for this study recognizes /məŋgɑ́ndzí ki dí/, etc., *I didn't eat*, etc., as a possible remote past negative even though he never uses it himself. ("Etc." means there is a full set of forms for this tense.)

Hodiernate Past of /nə/:

		singular			plural
1st.pers.	mabə́	*I was*		biábə̄	*we were*
2nd.pers.	wabə́	*you were*		miábə̄	*you were*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	abə́	*he/she was*	Cl.2	bə́bə́	*they were*
Cl.3	óbə́	*it was*	Cl.4	míbə́	*they were*
Cl.5	ábə́	*it was*	Cl.6	mə́bə́	*they were*
Cl.7	íbə́	*it was*	Cl.8	bíbə́	*they were*
Cl.9	ibə́	*it was*	Cl.10	íbə́	*they were*
Cl.11	óbə́	*it was*	Cl.5	ábə́	*they were*

In the first-person singular, there is an alternate form /məbə́/; and in the second-person singular, an alternate form /obə́/.

The negative of the hodiernate past is /mabə́ ki/, etc., *I wasn't*, etc.

There is variation in tone on some negatives between the various dialects, especially in the past, e.g. /mabə́ ki/, or /maábə̄ ki/, *I wasn't* (hodiernate past of /nə/). The informant used in this study has a rather strong preference for the first form, i.e. the one with the short, low-toned first vowel. Only the forms preferred by the informant used in this study will be given.

Recent Past of /nə/:

		singular			plural
1st.pers.	məmbə́	*I was*		bimbə́	*we were*
2nd.pers.	ombə́	*you were*		mimbə́	*you were*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	ambə́	*he/she was*	Cl.2	bə́mbə̄	*they were*
Cl.3	ómbə̄	*it was*	Cl.4	mímbə̄	*they were*
Cl.5	ámbə̄	*it was*	Cl.6	mə́mbə̄	*they were*
Cl.7	ímbə̄	*it was*	Cl.8	bímbə̄	*they were*
Cl.9	imbə́	*it was*	Cl.10	ímbə̄	*they were*
Cl.11	ómbə̄	*it was*	Cl.5	ámbə̄	*they were*

The negative of the recent past is /maə́mbə̄ ki/ or /maámbə̄ ki/, etc., *I wasn't*, etc.

Remote Past of /nə/:

		singular			plural
1st.pers.	məŋgábə́	*I was*		biŋgábə́	*we were*
2nd.pers.	oŋgábə́	*you were*		miŋgábə́	*you were*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	aŋgábə́	*he/she was*	Cl.2	bə́ŋgábə́	*they were*
Cl.3	óŋgábə́	*it was*	Cl.4	míŋgábə́	*they were*
Cl.5	áŋgábə́	*it was*	Cl.6	mə́ŋgábə́	*they were*
Cl.7	íŋgábə́	*it was*	Cl.8	bíŋgábə́	*they were*
Cl.9	iŋgábə́	*it was*	Cl.10	íŋgábə́	*they were*
Cl.11	oŋgábə́	*it was*	Cl.5	áŋgábə́	*they were*

In the first-person singular, there is an alternate form /maŋgábə́/.

The negative of the remote past is /məŋgábə́ ki/ or /maŋgábə́ ki/, etc., *I wasn't*, etc.

Hodiernate Past of /bóo/:

		singular			plural
1st.pers.	məbə́būo	*I was lying down*		bibə́būo	*we were lying down*
2nd.pers.	obə́būo	*you were lying down*		mibə́būo	*you were lying down*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	abə́būo	*he/she is lying down*	Cl.2	bə́bə́būo	*they were lying down*
Cl.3	íbə́būo	*it was lying down*	Cl.4	míbə́būo	*they were lying down*
Cl.5	ábə́būo	*it was lying down*	Cl.6	mə́bə́būo	*they were lying down*
Cl.7	íbə́būo	*it was lying down*	Cl.8	híbə́būo	*they were lying down*
Cl.9	ibə́būo	*it was lying down*	Cl.10	íbə́būo	*they were lying down*
Cl.11	óbə́būo	*it was lying down*	Cl.5	abə́būo	*they were lying down*

Recent Past of /bőo/:

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	məmbə́būo	*I was lying down*		bimbə́būo	*we were lying down*
2nd.pers.	ombə́būo	*you were lying down*		mimbə́būo	*you were lying down*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	ambə́būo	*he/she was lying down*	Cl.2	bə́mbə́būo	*they were lying down*
Cl.3	ímbə́būo	*it was lying down*	Cl.4	mímbə́būo	*they were lying down*
Cl.5	ámbə́būo	*it was lying down*	Cl.6	mə́mbə́būo	*they were lying down*
Cl.7	ímbə́būo	*it was lying down*	Cl.8	bímbə́būo	*they were lying down*
Cl.9	imbə́būo	*it was lying down*	Cl.10	ímbə́būo	*they were lying down*
Cl.11	ámbə́būo	*it was lying down*	Cl.5	ámbə́būo	*they were lying down*

There are alternate forms with the subject pronoun repeated, /məbə́ məbúo/, but the informant used for this study preferred the forms given above.

Remote Past of /bőo/:

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	məŋgábə́būo	*I was lying down*		biŋgábə́būo	*we were lying down*
2nd.pers.	oŋgábə́būo	*you were lying down*		miŋgábə́būo	*you were lying down*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	aŋgábə́būo	*he/she was lying down*	Cl.2	bə́ŋgábə́būo	*they were lying down*
Cl.3	íŋgábə́būo	*it was lying down*	Cl.4	míŋgábə́būo	*they were lying down*
Cl.5	áŋgábə́būo	*it was lying down*	Cl.6	mə́ŋgábə́būo	*they were lying down*
Cl.7	íŋgábə́būo	*it was lying down*	Cl.8	bíŋgábə́būo	*they were lying down*
Cl.9	iŋgábə́būo	*it was lying down*	Cl.10	íŋgábə́būo	*they were lying down*
Cl.11	óŋgábə́būo	*it was lying down*	Cl.5	áŋgábə́būo	*they were lying down*

Hodiernate Past 1 of /bələ́/:

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	məhə́bələ́	*I had*		bihə́bələ́	*we had*
2nd.pers.	ohə́bələ́	*you had*		mihə́bələ́	*you had*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	ɑhə́bələ́	*he/she had*	Cl.2	bə́hə́bə̄lə́	*they had*
Cl.3	óhə́bə̄lə́	*it had*	Cl.4	míhə́bə̄lə́	*they had*
Cl.5	ɑ́hə́bə̄lə́	*it had*	Cl.6	mə́hə́bə̄lə́	*they had*
Cl.7	íhə́bə̄lə́	*it had*	Cl.8	bíhə́bə̄lə́	*they had*
Cl.9	ihə́bələ́	*it had*	Cl.10	íhə́bə̄lə́	*they had*
Cl.11	óhə́bə̄lə́	*it had*	Cl.5	ɑ́hə́bə̄lə́	*they had*

Some speakers have a mid tone on the first syllable of /bələ́/ in all forms of hodiernate past 1, but the main speaker used for this study does not. There are alternate forms for all of the above without /h/. The /ə/ after the /h/ is assimilated to the preceding vowel when /h/ is omitted, e.g. /məə́bələ́/, *I had*, /biíbələ/, *we had,* /óóbələ/, Class 3, /ɑ́ɑ́bələ/, Class 5.

Hodiernate Past 2 of /bələ́/:

/mɑbə́bələ́/, *I had*, also occurs as a hodiernate past of /bələ́/. The same sort of double set of forms in the hodiernate past occurs for action verbs in the imperfect. See the discussion of the meaning and use of the forms under the hodiernate past imperfect. The other forms of the hodiernate past 2 are regular and predictable. As in hodiernate past 1, the main informant used for this study does not have a mid tone on the first syllable of /bələ́/ when it is preceded by a single high tone, but some speakers do.

Recent Past of /bələ/:

/məmbə́bələ́/, *I had*, is the recent past. The other pasts are regular and have the same complexities of tone variation the hodiernate pasts do. Also, the first- and second plurals vary between a single low-toned vowel and a rising-tone cluster, e.g. /bimbə́bələ́/ or /biímbə̄bə̄lə́/, *we had.*

Remote Past of /bələ́/:

/məŋgɑ́bə́bə̄lə́/, *I had,* and the other forms of the remote are regular and predictable.

Hodiernate Perfect With /ya/:

The hodiernate perfect is formed by suffixing /ya/, *already*, to the hodiernate past and means *already, previously, before.* Like the hodiernate past, it usually refers to earlier today. Sometimes the hodiernate perfect means *have done on a previous occasion or occasions.*

mədíya zoag.	*I have eaten elephant earlier (today).*
məkóya á yaúnde.	*I have gone to Yaoundé already (today).*

The hodiernate perfect also functions like a past perfect and can indicate a past before a past.

məkóáb alóməya mɔŋgɔ mfɔ̄.	*I found (on arrival) that he had sent another child.*

/məkóab/, *I found/met*, is a hodiernate past; and /alómeya/, *he has already sent*, is a hodiernate perfect, which shows that the sending took place before the arrival.

Recent Perfect With /ya/:

The recent perfect is formed by adding /ya/, *already*, to the recent past and can mean *already, previously, before.* Like the recent past, it refers mostly to yesterday to a month ago.

maádíya zoag.	*I have eaten elephant before (recently).*
maáyɛ́nya dzɔ.	*I have seen it previously (recently).*

The recent perfect also functions like a past perfect and can indicate a past before a past.

məkóáb naa vála aákəya.	*When I arrived, he had already gone.*

/məkóáb/ shows that the speaker arrived earlier today; and /aákəya/, *he has/had gone already*, a recent perfect shows that this person had left previous to today.

Remote Perfect With /ya/:

The remote perfect is formed by adding /ya/, *already*, to the remote past and can mean *already, previously, before.* Like the remote past, it refers to more than a month ago.

məŋgádíya zoag.	*I have eaten elephant on another/other occasion(s).*
məŋgáládya iyé.	*I have made a dress at another/other time(s).*

The remote perfect can also function like a past perfect, indicating a past before a past. Thus, it can be seen that the perfects with /ya/

are not a system with a present perfect and past perfect like English, but a system of perfects indicating relative distance from the present.

Negatives of Perfects:

The negative of all three perfects is the same. It is formed with the hodiernate past of /nə/, e.g. /mɑbə́ ki dí/, *I haven't/hadn't eaten yet/already.*

An absolute negative of the perfects is formed with /ŋgə́l tə/, *be still without*, e.g. /məŋgə́l tə dí/, *I have never eaten.*

Imperfect Pasts

Imperfect pasts occur in the hodiernate, recent, and remote pasts; but a number of other verb forms often occur in compound and complex sentences to express *continuation* or *duration*. The writer at present does not yet have sufficient text materials to make a judgment, but he strongly suspects that other verb forms, especially the subsecutive, are morecommonly used to express continuation and duration in the past than the imperfects.

Also, the most idiomatic, i.e. native-speaker situation-appropriate, translation of the imperfects may obscure the continuative or durative meaning of the imperfect. For example, /mɑbə́dī/, *I was eating, I have been eating*, is often used where a speaker of English would say something like *I went to eat, I was out to eat, I was gone to eat*, or *I was out to lunch/dinner.* The meaning is still continuative or durative since the meaning is that during the time referred to *I was eating*, but the translation may make it hard for the English speaker to see this.

As shown in the section on verb auxiliaries, Ewondo can also say /mɑbə́kə̄dī/, *I went to eat*, and this may well be said instead of /mɑbə́dī/.

Since past imperfects are quite likely to occur in sentences with more than one verb (e.g. *he was reading while (he was) waiting*), and since subsecutives commonly occur in descriptions and narratives, a subsecutive form like /mɑbə́ mədī/ might well occur instead of /mɑbə́dī/. For more details, see the section on subsecutives.

The negative of /mɑbə́dī/, etc., is /mɑɑ́bə̄ ki dí/ or /mɑbə́ ki dí/, *I wasn't/hadn't gone to eat*, etc. But, if an Ewondo speaker is asked for the negative of /mɑbə́dī/, he might also say /mɑɑ́bə̄ ki kə́dī/ or /mɑbə́ ki kə́dī/, *I didn't go eat*. Also, since in a particular situation /mɑ́bə̄ ki dí/ or /mɑbə́ ki dí/, might mean *I haven't been out to eat (yet)*, it is easy to see how forms with such similar meanings might be used to describe the same situation. This negative is quite regular and has the verb-subject prefixes like /mənə/.

The above discussion does not mean that speakers of Ewondo do not keep the meaning and function of their verb forms apart; nor does it mean that the various verb forms do not differ in meaning and use. It only means that there is no one-to-one correlation between the use and meaning of verb forms in Ewondo and verb forms in English.

Hodiernate Imperfect Past:

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	mɑbə́dI	*I was eating*		bibə́dI	*we were eating*
2nd.pers.	obə́dI	*you were eating*		mibə́dI	*you were eating*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	ɑbə́dI	*he/she was eating*	Cl.2	bɑ́bə̄dI	*they were eating*
Cl.3	óbə̄dI	*it was eating*	Cl.4	míbə̄dI	*they were eating*
Cl.5	ɑ́bə̄dI	*it was eating*	Cl.6	mə́bə̄dI	*they were eating*
Cl.7	íbə̄dI	*it was eating*	Cl.8	bíbə̄dI	*they were eating*
Cl.9	ibə́dI	*it was eating*	Cl.10	íbə̄dI	*they were eating*
Cl.11	óbə̄də̄	*it was eating*	Cl.5	ɑ́bə̄dI	*they were eating*

There is another set of forms for the hodiernate imperfect past, /məvə́dI/ or /məə́dI/, *I was eating*. The most common pronunciation (allophone) of /v/ in this form is a voiced "h", i.e. [ɦ], the sound of "h" in English *behave*. All my informants agree that there is no difference in meaning between these forms and /mɑbə́dI/. All the informants agree that there is a difference in "style" or "elegance", but the writer has not yet been able to determine what this difference is. The main informant used for this study says that forms like /məvə́dI/ and /məə́dI/ are an effort by some speakers to "improve upon the language" and to make it "more elegant". Another speaker claims that forms like /mɑbə́dI/ are "more elegant". The writer realizes that there is a "high" or "literary" style used in Ewondo narration, but he cannot begin to describe it yet. However, the writer has a slight suspicion, based on its apparent (in the writer's corpus) less-frequent occurrence, that /mɑbə̄dI/ is more literary. The negative of /mə(v)ə́dI/ is /mə(v)ə́bə́ kI dí/, *I wasn't eating*.

Recent Imperfect Past

/məmbə́dI/, *I was out to eat*, has the same kinds of meaning as /mɑbə́dI/, except that /məmbə́dI/ means *recently* and not *earlier today*. The tones of this tense are structured like those of the hodiernate imperfect past, i.e. /bə́mbə̄dI/, *they were out to eat*, and other forms with a high-toned verb-subject prefix have the pattern high-mid-mid. The negative is /məə́mbə̄ ki di/, etc., *I wasn't out to eat*, etc.

Remote Imperfect Past

/məŋgɑ́bə́dI/, *I was out to eat*, has the same kinds of meanings, except for time referent, as /məbə́dI/. The tone structure of this tense is also like that of the hodiernate past just above. The negative is /məŋgɑ́bə́ ki dí/, etc., *I wasn't out to eat*, etc.

Definite Future

The future verb forms are not tenses, as the past tenses are, since they do not refer to time, except in a general way. The futures refer to the *probability or liklihood of something taking place or existing.* The definite future is used to express *the speaker's belief that the probability that the event will take place or the state will exist is very high or almost certain.* Though the definite future does not refer to time except in a general way, it does imply that the event or state will be *soon.*

The definite future is formed with the auxiliary /ayi/, *want to.* In some sentences, /ayi/ means *want to.* In others, it is the grammatical mark of the definite future. Context must be used to tell which meaning is intended.

At conversation speed, /ayi/ is nearly always contracted to /ee/. /ee/ is written in this grammar, but the orthopgraphy uses only "ayi".

Though the speaker used for this study uses the definite future as described above, not all speakers use it with this much certainty.

Definite Future: Almost Certain: Want To

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	meedí, mayidí	*I will eat*		biíidí, biáyidí	*we will eat*
2nd.pers.	weedí, wayidí	*you will eat*		miíidi, miáyidí	*you will eat*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	eedí, ayidí	*he/she will eat*	Cl.2	béedí, báyidí	*they will eat*
Cl.3	wéedí, wáyidí	*it will eat*	Cl.4	myéedí, myáyidí	*they will eat*
Cl.5	léedí, láyidí	*it will eat*	Cl.6	méedí, máydí	*they will eat*
Cl.7	yéedí, yáyidí	*it will eat*	Cl.8	byéedí, byáyidí	*they will eat*
Cl.9	yeedí, yayidí	*it will eat*	Cl.10	yéedí, yáyidí	*they will eat*
Cl.11	wéedí, wáyidí	*it will eat*	Cl.5	léedí, láyidí	*they will eat*

Other possible translations of the definite future are *be about to (eat), be about to start (eating),* and *be going to (eat).*

Probable Future

The probable future means that *the probability of the event happening or the state occurring is fairly good, but by no means certain.* It often translates *will probably* or *will maybe*. Though the probable future is not a tense, it does imply that the event or state will be *in the not-too-distant future.*

Probable Future: Probably Will: Maybe Will

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	məndí	*I will probably eat*		biíndĪ	*we will probably eat*
2nd.pers.	ondí	*you will probably eat*		miíndĪ	*you will probably eat*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	əndí	*he/she will probably eat*	Cl.2	bə́ndĪ	*they will probably eat*
Cl.3	óndĪ	*it will probably eat*	Cl.4	míndĪ	*they will probably eat*
Cl.5	ándĪ	*it will probably eat*	Cl.6	mə́ndĪ, mándĪ	*they will probably eat*
Cl.7	índĪ	*it will probably eat*	Cl.8	bíndĪ	*they will probably eat*
Cl.9	indí	*it will probably eat*	Cl.10	índĪ	*they will probably eat*
Cl.11	óndĪ	*it will probably eat*	Cl.5	ándĪ	*they will probably eat*

Indefinite Future

The indefinite future means that *the probability of the event happening or the state occurring is quite low.* It translates as *might possibly* or *maybe one of these days* in English. Though the indefinite future does not refer to time directly, it does imply *way off in the future.*

Indefinite Future: Might Possibly: Maybe

	singular		plural	
1st.pers.	məŋgádĪ	*I may eat*	biíŋgādĪ	*we may eat*
2nd.pers.	oŋgádĪ	*you may eat*	miíŋgādĪ	*you may eat*

3rd.pers

Cl.1	iŋgádɪ̄	*he/she may eat*	Cl.2	bə́ŋgādɪ̄	*they may eat*
Cl.3	óŋgādɪ̄	*it may eat*	Cl.4	míŋgādɪ̄	*they may eat*
Cl.5	áŋgādɪ̄	*it may eat*	Cl.6	mə́ŋgādɪ̄,máŋgādɪ̄	*they may eat*
Cl.7	íŋgādɪ̄	*it may eat*	Cl.8	bíŋgādɪ̄	*they may eat*
Cl.9	iŋgádɪ̄	*it may eat*	Cl.10	íŋgādɪ̄	*they may eat*
Cl.11	óŋgādɪ̄	*it may eat*	Cl.5	áŋgādɪ̄	*they may eat*

Negative of Verbs:

As in the affirmative, there are contracted and uncontracted forms in definite future negative. Likewise, the contracted form usually occurs in speech, and the uncontracted form occurs in the orthography.

Definite Future Negative: Uncontracted Form:

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	maáyií ki dí	*I will not eat*		biáyií ki dí	*we will not eat*
2nd.pers.	waáyií ki dí	*you will not eat*		miáyií ki dí	*you will not eat*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	aáyií ki dí	*he/she will not eat*	Cl.2	báyií ki dí	*they will not eat*
Cl.3	wáyií ki dí	*it will not eat*	Cl.4	myáyií ki dí	*they will not eat*
Cl.5	láyií ki dí	*it will not eat*	Cl.6	máyií ki dí	*they will not eat*
Cl.7	yáyií ki dí	*it will not eat*	Cl.8	byáyií ki dí	*they will not eat*
Cl.9	yaáyií ki dí	*it will not eat*	Cl.10	yáyií ki dí	*they will not eat*
Cl.11	wáyií ki di	*it will not eat*	Cl.5	láyií ki dí	*they will not eat*

In the orthography, /maáyií ki dí/, *I won't eat*, is written "mǎyǐ ki dí". See the section on the phonology for a discussion of the transcription system used in this grammar.

Definite Future Negative: Contracted Form:

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	meé ki dí	*I will not eat*		bií ki dí	*we will not eat*
2nd.pers.	weé ki dí	*you will not eat*		mií ki dí	*you will not eat*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	eé ki dí	*he/she will not eat*	Cl.2	béeé ki dí	*they will not eat*
Cl.3	wéeé ki dí	*it will not eat*	Cl.4	myéeé ki dí	*they will not eat*
Cl.5	léeé ki dí	*it will not eat*	Cl.6	méeé ki dí	*they will not eat*
Cl.7	yéeé ki dí	*it will not eat*	Cl.8	byéeé ki dí	*they will not eat*
Cl.9	yeé ki dí	*it will not eat*	Cl.10	yéeé ki di	*they will not eat*
Cl.11	wéeé ki dí	*it will not eat*	Cl.5	léeé ki dí	*they will not eat*

The forms with /éeé/ have an alternate form /ééé/, /éeé/ and /ééé/ are not three times as long as a single vowel, but they are a little longer than a two-vowel cluster.

Probable Future Negative:

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	məə́ndĪ ki	*I probably won't eat*		biíndĪ ki	*we probably won't eat*
2nd.pers.	oóndĪ ki	*you probably won't eat*		miíndĪ ki	*you probably won't eat*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	ɑɑ́ndĪ ki	*he/she probably won't eat*	Cl.2	bə́ndĪ ki	*they probably won't eat*
Cl.3	óndĪ ki	*it probably won't eat*	Cl.4	míndĪ ki	*they probably won't eat*
Cl.5	ɑ́ndĪ ki	*it probably won't eat*	Cl.6	mə́ndĪ ki	*they probably won't eat*
Cl.7	índĪ ki	*it probably won't eat*	Cl.8	bíndĪ ki	*they probably won't eat*
Cl.9	iíndĪ ki	*it probably won't eat*	Cl.10	índĪ ki	*they probably won't eat*
Cl.11	óndĪ ki	*it probably won't eat*	Cl.5	ɑ́ndĪ ki	*they probably won't eat*

The second-person singular has the alternate form /wɑɑ́ndɪ̄ ki/; and Class 6, the alternate form /mɑ́ndɪ̄ ki/.

Indefinite Future Negative:

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	məə́ŋgɑ̄dɪ̄ ki	*I may not eat*		biíŋgɑ̄dɪ̄ ki	*we may not eat*
2nd.pers.	oóŋgɑ̄dɪ̄ ki	*you may not eat*		miíŋgɑ̄dɪ̄ ki	*you may not eat*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	ɑɑ́ŋgɑ̄dɪ̄ ki	*he/she may not eat*	Cl.2	bə́ŋgɑ̄dɪ̄ ki	*they may not eat*
Cl.3	óŋgɑ̄dɪ̄ ki	*it may not eat*	Cl.4	míŋgɑ̄dɪ̄ ki	*they may not eat*
Cl.5	ɑ́ŋgɑ̄dɪ̄ ki	*it may not eat*	Cl.6	mə́ŋgɑ̄dɪ̄ ki	*they may not eat*
Cl.7	íŋgɑ̄dɪ̄ ki	*it may not eat*	Cl.8	bɔ́ŋgɑ̄dɪ̄ ki	*they may not eat*
Cl.9	iíŋgɑ̄dɪ̄ ki	*it may not eat*	Cl.10	íŋgɑ̄dɪ̄ ki	*they may not eat*
Cl.11	óŋgɑ̄dɪ̄ ki	*it may not eat*	Cl.5	ɑ́ŋgɑ̄dɪ̄ ki	*they may not eat*

The first-person singular has the alternate form /mɑɑ́ŋgɑ̄dɪ̄ ki/; and Class 6, the alternate form /mɑ́ŋgɑ̄dɪ̄ ki/.

Futures of Locative-Stative Verbs:

Locative-stative verbs do not occur in the future, since they refer to a past or a present. An action verb has to be used for the future of a locative-stative verb. The action verb may be a derived form of a locative-stative or it may be a totally different, suppletive stem. For example, /tɔbɔ/, *live*, *dwell*, *set oneself down*, is an action verb derived from the locative-stative verb /toɑ́/, *be sitting down;* and /tɔbɔ/ is used as the future for /toɑ́/. (See the section on verb-stem formation for an explanation of /-bɔ/.) /tɔbɔ/ is also used as the suppletive future of /nə/, *BE*.

The future negative of a locative-stative verb is the negative of the derived or suppletive action verb that substitutes for it in the future affirmative. For example, the negative of /mɑyitɔbɔ/ or /meetɔbɔ/, *I will be/sit/dwell/live*, is /mɑɑ́yií ki tɔbɔ/ or /meé ki tɔbɔ/, *I will not be/sit/swell/live.*

Definite Future of /nə/ and /tɔbɔ/:

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	mɑyitɔbɔ	*I will be*		biɑ́tɔbɔ	*we will be*
2nd.pers.	wɑyitɔbɔ	*you will be*		miɑ́yitɔbɔ	*you will be*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	ɑyitɔbɔ	*he/she will be*	Cl.2	bɑ́yitɔbɔ	*they will be*
Cl.3	wɑ́yitɔbɔ	*it will be*	Cl.4	myɑ́itɔbɔ	*they will be*
Cl.5	lɑ́yitɔbɔ	*it will be*	Cl.6	mɑ́yitɔbɔ	*they will be*
Cl.7	yɑ́yitɔbɔ	*it will be*	Cl.8	byɑ́yitɔbɔ	*they will be*
Cl.9	yɑyitɔbɔ	*it will be*	Cl.10	byɑ́yitɔbɔ	*they will be*
Cl.11	wɑ́yitɔbɔ	*it will be*	Cl.5	yɑ́yitɔbɔ	*they will be*

Probable Future of /nə/ and /tɔbɔ/:

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	məntɔbɔ́	*I probably will be*		biínt ɔ̄bɔ	*we probably will be*
2nd.pers.	ontɔbɔ́	*you probably will be*		miíntɔ̄bɔ́	*you probably will be*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	ɑntɔbɔ́	*he/she probably will be*	Cl.2	bə́ntɔ̄bɔ́	*they probably will be*
Cl.3	óntɔ̄bɔ́	*it probably will be*	Cl.4	míntɔ̄bɔ́	*they probably will be*
Cl.5	ɑ́ntɔ̄bɔ́	*it probably will be*	Cl.6	mə́ntɔ̄bɔ́	*they probably will be*
Cl.7	íntɔ̄bɔ́	*it probably will be*	Cl.8	bíntɔ̄bɔ́	*they probably will be*
Cl.9	intɔbɔ́	*it probably will be*	Cl.10	íntɔ̄bɔ́	*they probably will be*
Cl.11	óntɔ̄bɔ́	*it probably will be*	Cl.5	ɑ́ntɔ̄bɔ́	*they probably will be*

The negative of the probable future is /məə́ntɔbɔ́ ki/, etc., *I probably won't be*, etc.

Indefinite Future of /nə/ and /tɔbɔ/:

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	məŋgɑ́tɔbɔ́	*I may be*		biŋgɑ́tɔbɔ́	*we may be*
2nd.pers.	oŋgɑ́tɔbɔ́	*you may be*		miŋgɑ́tɔbɔ́	*you may be*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	ɑŋgɑ́tɔbɔ́	*he/she may be*	Cl.2	bə́ŋgɑ̄tɔbɔ́	*they may be*
Cl.3	óŋgɑ̄tɔbɔ́	*it may be*	Cl.4	míŋgɑ̄tɔbɔ́	*they may be*
Cl.5	ɑ́ŋgɑ̄tɔbɔ́	*it may be*	Cl.6	mə́ŋgɑ̄tɔbɔ́	*they may be*
Cl.7	íŋgɑ̄tɔbɔ́	*it may be*	Cl.8	bíŋgɑ̄tɔbɔ́	*they may be*
Cl.9	iŋgɑ́tɔbɔ́	*it may be*	Cl.10	íŋgɑ̄tɔbɔ́	*they may be*
Cl.11	óŋgɑ̄tɔbɔ́	*it may be*	Cl.5	ɑ́ŋgɑ̄tɔbɔ́	*they may be*

The indefinite future negative is /məə́ŋgɑ̄tɔbɔ́ ki/, etc., *I may not eat*, etc.

Imperfect Future: /m̀bɑ́ɑ́/

/m̀bɑ́ɑ́/, *BE still/yet, will always be,* is very similar to /ŋgə́lə/, *am still here, haven't quit doing yet.* See the discussion and examples of these in the section on subsecutive habituals. /m̀bɑ́ɑ́/ means *BE still/ yet in some state/condition at the present time and continue to be in that state/condition for some time into the future, perhaps permanently.*

Y(ə) ɑmbɑ́ɑ́ vɑ́ʔ	*Is he still here?*
Məmbɑ́ɑ́ ɲyə́gələ.	*I will always be a teacher.*
Məmbɑ́ɑ́ mətoɑ́.	*I sit down all the time.*

The tones used in the imperfect future vary considerably among various speakers. The table given below is the usage of the main speaker used for this study. Some speakers use /bimbɑ́ɑ́/ in the first-person plural and /mimbɑ́ɑ́/ in the second-person plural instead of the forms given below. In Class 2, some speakers vary between /bə̄́mbɑ́ɑ́/ and /bə́əmbɑ́ɑ́/, and some speakers use only one of these forms. The same sort of variation occurs in Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11.

Imperfect Future: /mbáá/: BE Still/Yet: Will Always be:

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	**məmbáá**	*I will always be*		**biímba**	*we will always be*
2nd.pers.	**ombáá**	*you will always be*		**miímba**	*you will always be*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	**ambáa**	*he/she will always be*	Cl.2	**bə́m̄báá**	*they will always be*
Cl.3	**óm̄báá**	*it will always be*	Cl.4	**mím̄báá**	*they will always be*
Cl.5	**ám̄báá**	*it will always be*	Cl.6	**mə́m̄báá**	*they will always be*
Cl.7	**ím̄báá**	*it will always be*	Cl.8	**bím̄báá**	*they will always be*
Cl.9	**imbáá**	*it will always be*	Cl.10	**ím̄báá**	*they will always be*
Cl.11	**óm̄báá**	*it will always be*	Cl.5	**ám̄báá**	*they will always be*

Stem Extensions

Bantu languages very commonly use stem extensions to form expanded stems. The stem extensions have grammatical meanings, such as cause a change of state, which are incorporated into the meaning of the stem.

Medio-Passive: /-b/ Plus Stem Vowel:

The medio-passive is marked by /-b/ plus a repetition of the stem vowel and means *put oneself in or make oneself to be in a certain position/condition.* The medio-passive differs from the reciprocal, which means *do something to oneself.* The reciprocal is used to mean such things as *hit oneself* or *kill oneself*; whereas the medio-passive is used to mean such things as *lay oneself down, set oneself down, stand oneself up, wake up (oneself),* or *become weak.*

Locative-Stative	Medio-Passive	Active
məbúo *I am lying down, I am in a prone position*	mabómbo *I am lying down, I am getting into a prone position*	mabóe *I am laying someone/ something down*
mətoá *I am sitting down, I am in a seated position*	matɔbɔ *I am sitting down, I am getting into a seated position*	matoe *I am setting someone/ something down*
mətə́lə *I am standing up/ still, I am in a standing position*	matə́bə *I am standing up, I am getting into a standing position*	matə́le *I am standing someone/ something up*
məvəə́ *I am awake*	mavəbə *I am waking up, I am becoming awake*	mavələ *I am waking someone up*
mətəg *I am soft/mellow/ weak/gentle*	matəgəbə *I am getting/ becoming soft/ tender/sensitive*	matəgə *I am softening/weakening someone/something*

Many verbs do not occur in all three of the above forms. Also, only a few have /N/ before the medio-passive suffix, e.g. /bómbo/, *lay oneself down,* /lúmbu/, *lean/bend (oneself) over/down,* and /sómbo/, *stoop (oneself) over/down.*

There are some verbs which are apparently medio-passive but for which there no longer exists a simple stem, e.g. /kɔ́bɔ/, *speak, talk.*

Applicative: /-l/ Plus Stem Vowel:

The applicative is formed by the suffix /-l/ plus a repetition of the stem vowel. (Note again that /e/, /ɛ/, and /ə/ can alternate in the various positions in a word and that, in a series of three of the same vowels, the middle vowel usually becomes /ə/ at conversation speed.) The applicative when added to a locative-stative verb (an intransitive) forms a causative (a transitive), e.g. /vəə́/, *be awake*, and /vələ́/, *wake someone up*. When added to a transitive verb, an applicative forms an intensive causative, e.g. /bom/, *hit, beat, play a musical instrument*, and /boməlo/, *hammer, pound*. One might think that /-l/ plus the stem vowel was just iterative or repetitive; but, if one realizes that *hit, beat, play a musical instrument* are already repeated, iterative actions, then one sees that the meaning is intensive. Note that there are applicative forms for which there are no corresponding forms without the applicative suffix.

Locative-Stative (Intransitive)		Applicative-Causative	
vəə́	*be awake*	vələ	*wake someone up*
yə́gə	*learn, imitate*	yə́gələ	*teach*
		tə́le	*stand something/someone up*

The old Bantu way of forming causatives by the applicative suffix is no longer extensively used in Ewondo. See the section on the formation of causatives by suffixing the stem vowel to form causatives.

Active (Transitive)		Applicative-Causative-Intensive	
yɑ́ŋ	*grill, roast*	yɑ́ŋəlɑ	*grill/roast intensely*
bɑ́b	*reheat*	bɑbəlɑ	*reheat intensely*
yɛ́m	*make firm/tight/safe/ secure*	yɛ́mələ	*fasten/close/lock in/up*
kɑ́b	*relight, rekindle*	kɑ́bəlɑ	*relight/rekindle with intense effort*
bom	*hit, beat, knock, play a musical instrument*	boməlo	*hammer, pound*
		ndə́gələ	*punish, torment, annoy, bother*
		ɲyɔməlɔ	*tickle*
		kogəlo	*beg, plead, beseech, pray*

One might wonder how /bié/, *bear a child*, and /biɑ́li/, *be born*, fit into this system since they seem to be structured exactly the opposite of the system described above. Apparently, /bié/ formerly had an /-l/ at the end of the stem, which is now lost in the active form; and the old form /*biɑ́l/ became /bié/. /biɑ́li/ is a stative verb formed with the repetition of the stem vowel as a stative suffix. See the section on the formation statives by repeating the stem vowel.

Gradual Completive: /-z/ Plus Stem Vowel:

The gradual completive is marked by the suffix /-z/ plus a repetition of the stem vowel and means *do completely but in steps or stages, do gradually but thoroughly/extensively*, e.g./sugəzu/ means *shake thoroughly by repeated shaking.*

sug	*shake off/out/up; greet*	suguzu	*shake several times/ well/thoroughly, rinse out*
sog	*make noise*	sogəzo	*make noise all around/ all about*
lóg	*pour out*	lógəzo	*pour out all around/all about*
dím	*put out, extinguish*	díməzɑn	*disappear gradually*
kom	*build, construct, prepare, improve*	komezɑn	*prepare/get oneself ready*

Distributive: /-d/ Plus Stem Vowel:

The distributive is formed by the suffix /-d/ plus a repetition of the stem vowel and means *plural action, do several times/repeatedly/ iteratively*. Apparently education in Ewondo is conceived of as a repeated, continued process of building and improving since /kom/, *build, construct, prepare, improve*, is used as the stem for the distributive verb / omənd o/, *educate.*

koɑg	*crush*	koɔgədɔ	*crush by stamping on*
kom	*build, construct, prepare, improve*	koməndo	*educate*
kɑ́b	*relight, rekindle*	kɑ́bədɑ	*blink (eyes)*

Causatives From Action Verbs:

Causatives, i.e. *make someone/something do/be*, are formed in more than one way in Ewondo. As shown above, the applicative suffix /-l/ plus stem vowel is one way. Another way is to repeat the stem vowel with a low tone as a suffix. Causatives may be formed from either intransitive verbs like /díg/, *be burning, be on fire*, or transitive verbs like /ɲú/, *drink.*

lod	*pass/go/come by*	lodo	*make pass/go/come by*
díg	*burn, be burning*	dígi	*make burn*
ɲú	*drink*	ɲúu	*make/give someone to drink*
bɛ́d	*climb*	bə́də, bɛ́de	*lift/raise up*

kúi	*go/come out*	kúli	*pull/take out*

Locative-Stative Verbs From Action Verbs:

Locative-stative verbs can be formed from action verbs by adding a low-toned /-i/ suffix. (However, not all verbs ending in an /-i/ in the second syllable are locative-stative verbs formed from action verbs.)

Action Verb		Locative-Stative	
dib	*stop/fill up, enclose*	dibi	*be stopped/filled up/ enclosed*
ɲab	*tear/rip (up/open), burst*	ɲabi	*be torn/ripped (up/open)/ burst*
sal	*split*	sali	*be split*
líg	*leave (behind), abandon*	lígi	*be left (behind)/abandoned, remain (behind)*
tsíg	*cut off/down*	tsígi	*be cut off/down*
búg	*break in two/up*	búgi	*be broken in two/up*

Locative-stative verbs such as those above mean *exist/be in a state/ condition*. For example, /yábūgi/ does mean *it is broken (up/apart)*, but it could also mean *it is in a state of disintegrating*, which might well translate *it's breaking up/down* or *it's being broken up/down*.

Locative-stative verbs can also be formed by repeating the stem vowel with a high tone.

Action Verb		Locative-Stative	
kələ	*hang up*	kələ́	*be hanging/hung (up)*
bəgə	*load, put on a load/clothes*	bəgə́	*be carrying a load, be wearing clothes*
dii	*(make) close*	dií	*be closed*
dzogé	*permit to/let/leave lying resting*	dzogó	*lie/be lying resting*
fɛd	*lock/close up*	fədə́	*be locked/closed up*
yɛ́m	*tie up, fasten*	yɛ́mə	*be tied/fastened up*
ŋgúni	*heap/pile up; give someone too much*	ŋgúnu	*be heaped/piled up; have too much on hand*
yáɛ	*(make) open*	yóo	*be (standing) open*

The speaker used for this study uses /kələ/, *hang up*, and /kələ́/, *be hanging up*; but some speakers use /kəle/, *hang up*, and /kəlí/, *be hanging up*.

Perfect Medio-Passives From Causative Action Verbs:

An /-ŋ/ suffix forms one type of medio-passive verb. It means *get/be/become in a state or condition.*

Causative		Locative-Stative	
ɲii	*maintain/sustain life, revive*	ɲiŋ	*live, be alive, be active*
dzéɛ, dzáa	*lose*	dzáŋ	*get lost, lose one's way*
dɛɛ, daa	*take someone/something across*	daŋ	*cross/go over/across, pass, surpass*
ɲíɛ, ɲía	*nurse, suckle, make/ give to suck*	ɲáŋ	*suck, nurse, get milk by sucking*

The function of the medio-passive /ŋ/ is one of the most difficult to describe for Ewondo since it means a *continuing perfective state,* which of course results in *a present or current state.*

Perhaps it is easiest to see this in /dzáŋ/. If one has gotten lost, one is lost. The present state is the result of something that took place in the past. Perhaps, the English expression with *succeed* is a good way to help the speaker of English understand this construction. *I have succeeded in getting myself lost (.)* means simply *I have gotten myself into the condition of being lost (.)*, therefore, *I am lost.*

With /daŋ/, the idea is likewise to *have accomplished or succeeded in doing something.* /madaŋ/, *I cross, I pass over,* would be clearer if translated *I get across, I get over.* Perhaps the stative nature of /daŋ/ can be seen more clearly in the following sentences.

É zɛn ɲɪ yadaŋ m̀bómbo.	*This road is very flat.*
Mimbaŋ mízoag míádaŋ anén.	*The elephants'tusks are very big.*

These sentences literally mean *This road surpasses (in) flatness(.)* and *The elephants' tusks surpass (in) bigness.* Thus, it can be seen that the meaning is *has/have been made to be* or *has/have gotten to be.*

/ɲiŋ/ can properly be translated *live, be alive*, but often has the meaning *come alive, look alive*; and /ɲáŋ/ does mean *nurse, suck* (intransitive), but the literal idea is *milk oneself, succeed in getting oneself milk.* (The noun *milk* is /maɲáŋ/.)

Reciprocal: /-ɑn/

The reciprocal means *do to each other/one another* and is marked by an /-ɑn/ suffix. (However, not all /-ɑn/ suffixes are reciprocal.)

diŋ	*love*	diŋ	*love each other*
lúg	*marry*	lúgɑn	*marry each other*
síŋ	*hate*	síŋɑn	*hate each other*
yɛ́n	*see*	yɛ́nɑn	*see each other*

See also the discussion of the reciprocal in the section on pronouns.

Action Verb to Locative-Stative: /-ɑn/

An /-ɑn/ suffix is used to form locative-statives verbs from action verbs and means *be in a state/condition.*

kúb	*pour/spill (out)*	kúbɑn	*be poured/spilled (out)*
lób	*bite*	ló[illegible]ɑn	*have the habit of biting*
sus	*descend*	suɑn	*occur, happen, arise, appear*
súm	*stick into the ground*	súmɑn	*be stuck into the ground*
lɑ́b	*push/stick down/under, plunge*	lɑ́bɑn	*immerse/plunge*
dib	*hit, beat*	dibɑn	*fall/be fallen down/over*

If /lóbɑn/ refers to animal, it means literally *has the habit of biting, bites repeatedly*; but if it refers to a person, /lóbɑn/ has the figurative meanings of *lies, cheats, steals, insults*, etc.

Imperfect or Potential Passive: /-bɑn/:

An imperfect and/or potential passive is formed with /-bɑn/. It means *it is possible to do something* or *something is being/has been being done.* It may also refer to a past time.

yɑ́yɑ̄məbɑn	*It is being cooked.* *It can be cooked.* *It is/was/has been cooked.*
yɑ́yɛ̄nəbɑn	*It is being seen.* *It can be seen.* *It is visible.*
bidí bídíbɑn	*The food is/was/has been eaten.* *The food can be eaten.* *The food is edible.*

malúg(ə)ban	*I am eligible to get married.* *I can get married.*

The above translations should make it clear that the passive with /-ban/ is a descriptive or stative.

Ezímbí yáyāban á mgbág.	*The box opens on the side.*
Kpəm ee mbon byɔdíban ǹsámbá.	*Cassava leaves and cassava taste good together.*
Alέn ákpəbanya.	*The palm tree has been cut down.*
Matooban.	*I am getting (myself) established.*

In the first sentence above, /yáyāban/ describes a potential or state, a fact about the box. It could just as well be translated *The box can be opened on the side.* The second sentence above literally means *Cassava leaves and cassava are eaten together (.)*, but the meaning is that *they eat well together*, i.e. *they taste good when eaten together.* The third sentence has the /-ya/, *already*, suffix and shows that the tree has already been felled. The verb in the last sentence /matooban/ is derived from /to-/, *sit, dwell, be,* and indicates that the speaker has done something regarded as part of getting himself established in life, e.g. new wife, new job, new house.

As discussed in the section on phonology, consonant clusters are often broken up by an intrusive /ə/; but sometimes a lengthened nasal occurs before a stop, e.g. /diŋban/, *he is lovable, he is being loved,* also occurs or /diŋəban/ or /diŋŋban/.

Perfect or Completed Passive: /Ǹ-/ Plus /-an/:

The perfect and/or completed passive is formed with some form of /nə/, *BE*, plus a gerund, which consists of a homorganic nasal prefix plus a verb stem plus the locative-stative suffix /-an/ if the stem can take /-an/ and means that *someone/something has undergone/received some action and therefore exists in a certain state/condition.*

Înə ɲyámán	*It is cooked.* *It has been cooked.*
Ínə mmanan	*It is finished.* *It is all gone/used up.*
bidí ndíán	*The food is eaten up.* *The food is all gone.*
mənə nlúgán	*I am married.* *I got married.*
anə ŋwúán	*He is dead.*

ínə ŋkusán	*It is sold/bought.*
ínə ɲyə́gə	*It is learned.*
ínə ɲyə́gə́lə́	*It is taught.*

Stems ending in stem extensions and in /-g/ don't take /-an/ in the perfect-completive passive.

Locative-stative verbs that end in the /-an/ which transforms them from action verbs to locative-statives do not take a second /-an/ in the passive.

yákilan	*it is turning*
yákilban	*it is being turned* *it can be turned*
ínə ŋkilán	*it is turned* *it has been turned*

The differences between the imperfect and/or potential state and the perfect and/or completed state can be seen in the following examples. (/kili/, *turn*, *revolve*, and /kilan/, *prohibit*, have the same shape in some forms.)

yákilban	*It is being prohibited.* *It can be prohibited.* *It is prohibited.*
íŋgákilban	*It was/has been prohibited (and still is).*
ínə ŋkilán	*It is prohibited.*
íŋgábə́ ŋkilán	*It was/has been prohibited (but is no longer).*
maduban	*I am being baptized.* *I am soaking myself.*
byáduban	*They can be soaked.* *They are being soaked.* *They are soakable.*
byánə nduban	*They are soaked.* *They have been soaked.*

The imperfect-potential passive is a state/condition that may occur from time to time and may be occurring now, i.e. an iterative or repeated condition that the subject may potentially undergo at any time. The perfect-completed passive is a state/condition that occurs prior to some point of reference and is characteristic of the subject at the time of the point of reference, i.e. the existing state/condition is the continued result of what the subject previously underwent.

The logical subject/agent, which usually isn't expressed, is marked by /ee/, *and, with.*

Bɔ́ŋgɔ́ bə sikúlu bə́nə ɲyə́gə́lə́ ee bəɲə́gələ.	*Students are taught by teachers.*
Wɑ́ ɔ́nə ɲɲoɑ́n ee dɔ́bə́dɔ.	*The arm is/was extended by the doctor.*

The logical subject/agent is also marked by /ɑ/, *in, at, to, by,* and /ɑ́bə/ *at, of, by, at the house/place of.*

Meyɔg mə́nə ɲɲúɑ́n ɑ́ bod.	*The palmwine was drunk by the men.*
Ínə mvɑ́ɑ́n ɑ́bə̄ Anton.	*It was given by Antoine.*

Instruments are also marked by /ee/, but Ewondo avoids both an agent and an instrument marked by /ee/ in the same sentence.

Bidí bíɑ́dīban ee tog.	*The food is being eaten with a spoon.*

Passives may also occur in a series of verbs.

Afúb ɑ́ŋgɑ́mɑn líban ódzɑ̄n	*The field was completely cleared off the day before yesterday.* *(The field was finished cleaned the day before yesterday.)*

Need: Necessity: Compulsion: Obligation: /yi/ Plus /-ɑn/:

Need, necessity, compulsion, and strong obligation are expressed by /yi/, *will, want to,* plus the locative-stative /-ɑn/.

mɑyiɑn kə	*I must go, I need to go, I really should go.*
mɑyiɑn dí	*I have to eat, I need to eat, I really ought to eat.*

/yiɑn/ is often /yiɛn/ at conversation speed.

Ayiɛn kə ɑ́ sikúlu mbɑ́n.	*He has to go to school regularly.*

Inceptive:

The inceptive has two forms: repetition of the stem vowel with a high tone, e.g. /məlɑdɑ́/, *(then) I (will) sew*; and a lengthened vowel with a low-high tone pattern on the verb-subject prefix plus a /ŋgɑ-/ prefix, e.g. /məə́ŋgɑkə/ *(then) I (will) go*. The meaning of the inceptive is *something is about to begin or is just beginning*. An inceptive is often the second verb in a sentence with the meaning *if/when something happens, then something else happens or begins to happen*. If an inceptive is the only verb in a sentence, it usually has /-yɑ/, *already*, suffixed.

məə́ŋgɑdíyɑ	*I am already eating* *I am about to eat* *I am about to start eating*
məə́ŋgɑkəyɑ	*I am about to leave* *I have already started leaving* *I am already in the process of leaving*
ɑɑ́ntə̄lə	*He was already standing there*
məkə́ə́	*Then I will leave*

Inceptive Stems:

Stem		Inceptive	Stem		Inceptive
kə	*go, leave*	kə́ə́	kɑd	*tell*	kɑdɑ́
lɑd	*sew*	lɑdɑ́	búg	*break*	búgú
lod	*pass by*	lodó	woé	*kill*	wóé
tɑg	*be happy*	tɑɑ́	líg	*leave behind*	lígí
kus	*buy*	kuú	lígí	*remain behind*	lígí
woe	*laugh*	woé	dii	*close*	dií
wulu	*walk, run*	wulú	tɔbɔ	*sit down*	tɔbɔ́
dɑŋ	*cross over*	dɑŋɑ́	nɔŋ	*take*	nɔŋɔ́
bum	*roast*	bumú	lɑŋ	*count, read*	lɑ́ŋɑ́
mɑnɑ	*finish*	mɑnɑ́	lúmbu	*bend over*	lumbu
ndɑ́mɑn	*ruin*	ndɑ́mɑ́n	bɑ́mɑn	*put together, mix*	bɑ́mɑ́n
yɑ́n	*pay*	yɑ́ɑ́n	kogolo	*ask, beg*	kogóló
yə́gələ	*teach*	yə́gə́lə́	túb	*run away*	túbú

In most cases, the meaning of the inceptive would be readily apparent; but in a few cases, the speaker of English will need a bit of imagination to get the exact meaning. For example, when referring to a door, /dií/ could mean *about to close*, but in most cases would mean *be/stand ajar, be opened slightly.*

osɔ́ məə́ŋgakə	*If you come, (then) I will leave.*
məə́bə̄b(ə) ɑ́ mvū nɑ́ɑ ɑɑ́ntə̄lə	*When I looked around, (then) he was standing there.*
oyíd(í) m(ə) ɑnɑ́ məkə́ə́	*If you beat me, (then) I will leave.*
ɑ́ yɛ́n(ə́) ɑ́ŋgɑ̄yɛ́n(ə́) mɑ̄ ɑtúbú	*When he saw me, (then) he ran away.*

Nekes reports an inceptive /bəə́ŋgɑkəyɑ́ɑ óosú/, *they have already gone on ahead (.)* (p.180). The writer tried to elicit this inceptive from the informant used for this study, but he rejected it as an impossible form. Instead, he uses a past form such as /bə́ŋgɑ́kəyɑ ósū/. The writer did hear the form quoted by Nekes from one speaker of Ewondo, but he is from some fifty kilometers west of Yaoundé.

Jussive:

The jussive is marked by tone structure and has various command or obligation meanings such as *should, ought to, have/let someone do, or (someone) tells (a person) to do (something).* The verb-subject prefixes in the affirmative have a high tone except in the first- and second-person plural, which have low-high; but in the negative, the verb-subject prefixes have the same tone structure as the present affirmative as described in the section on present tense. Monosyllabic stems have low tone on the verb stem in the affirmative; but in the negative, monosyllabic stems have the same tone as in the present tense.

Monosyllabic Stem:

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	mə́di	*I should eat*		biídi	*we should eat*
2nd.pers.	ódi	*you should eat*		miídi	*you should eat*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	ɑ́di	*he/she should eat*	Cl.2	bə́di	*they should eat*
Cl.3	ódi	*it should eat*	Cl.4	mídi	*they should eat*

Cl.5	ɑ́di	*it should eat*	Cl.6	mə́di	*they should eat*
Cl.7	ídi	*it should eat*	Cl.8	bídi	*they should eat*
Cl.9	ídi	*it should eat*	Cl.10	ídi	*they should eat*
Cl.11	ódi	*it should eat*	Cl.5	ɑ́di	*they should eat*

Monosyllabic Stem: Negative

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	tə mɑdi	*I shouldn't eat*		tə biɑ́di	*we shouldn't eat*
2nd.pers.	tə wɑdi	*you shouldn't eat*		tə miɑ́di	*you shouldn't eat*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	tə ɑ̀di	*he/she shouldn't eat*	Cl.2	tə bɑ́di	*they shouldn't eat*
Cl.3	tə wɑ́di	*it shouldn't eat*	Cl.4	tə myɑ́di	*they shouldn't eat*
Cl.5	tə lɑ́di	*it shouldn't eat*	Cl.6	tə mɑ́di	*they shouldn't eat*
Cl.7	tə yɑ́di	*it shouldn't eat*	Cl.8	tə byɑ́di	*they shouldn't eat*
Cl.9	tə yɑdi	*it shouldn't eat*	Cl.10	tə yɑ́di	*they shouldn't eat*
Cl.11	tə wɑ́di	*it shouldn't eat*	Cl.5	tə lɑ́di	*they shouldn't eat*

Some other monosyllabic stems in the jussive are:

Stem		Jussive
bɔ̀	*do, make*	mə́bɔ
lúg	*marry*	mə́lug

The negatives of these are:

tə mɑbɔ	*I shouldn't eat*
tə mɑlúg	*I shouldn't marry*

Bisyllabic and trisyllabic stems have their usual high or low tones on the first syllable of the stem and low tones on the following syllables of the stem.

Stem		Jussive
woe	*laugh*	mə́woe
kɔ́bɔ	*talk, speak*	mə́kɔ́bɔ
tɔbɔ	*sit, live, stay*	mə́tɔbɔ

bími	*hit, beat*	mə́bími
kogolo	*add, increase*	mə́kogolo
yə́gələ	*teach*	mə́yə́gələ

Negatives of these are:

tə mɑwoe	*I shouldn't laugh*
tə mɑkɔ́bɔ	*I shouldn't speak*
tə mɑtɔbɔ	*I shouldn't stay*
tə mɑbími	*I shouldn't beat*
tə mɑkogolo	*I shouldn't increase*
tə mɑyə́gələ	*I shouldn't teach*

Besides *should*, and *ought to*, the jussive is used as an imperative. Sometimes the appropriate translation would be *I want (someone) to do something* or *have/let (someone) do something*. For example, /ódi/ could mean *I want you to eat*, and /ɑ́di/ could mean *I want him to eat*, or *have/let him eat*. Though it is possible for these meanings to occur with the first-person singular, /mə́di/ would rarely be used to mean *I want me to eat* or *let me eat*. But, when talking to oneself, /mə́di/ would be used to tell oneself to eat.

When used as an imperative in the negative, the jussive occurs with /bə́-/, and not with /tə/.

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	məbə́di	*I am not to eat*		bibə́di	*we are not to eat*
2nd.pers.	obə́di	*you are not to eat*		mibə́di	*you are not to eat*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	ɑbə́di	*he/she is not to eat*	Cl.2	bə́bə́di	*they are not to eat*
Cl.3	óbə́di	*it is not to eat*	Cl.4	míbə́di	*they are not to eat*
Cl.5	ɑ́bə́di	*it is not to eat*	Cl.6	mə́bə́di	*they are not to eat*
Cl.7	íbə́di	*it is not to eat*	Cl.8	bíbə́di	*they are not to eat*
Cl.9	ibə́di	*it is not to eat*	Cl.10	íbə́di	*they are not to eat*
Cl.11	óbə́di	*it is not to eat*	Cl.5	ɑ́bə́di	*they are not to eat*

Adzó naa biídi.	*He said we should eat.* *He said we were to eat.* *He let/had us eat.*
Adzó naa bibə́di.	*He said we shouldn't eat.* *He said we were not to eat.* *He didn't let/had us eat.*
Adzó naa bə́kə.	*He said they should go.* *He said they were to go.* *He let/had us go.*
Adzó naa bə́kə̄lə́(g).	*He said they should go.* *He said they were to go.* *He let/had us go.*

In all of the sentences just above, /nə/ may occur instead of /naa/ and has the same meaning. In /adzó naa bə́kə/, the meaning is *He said they should go right away(.), He let/had them go right away.* In /adzó naa bə́kə̄lə̄(g)/, the time is indefinite and unstated.

Nekes often reports a rising tone on verbs when followed by another word where the informant used for this study has no rise (e.g. p.187).

(Nekes)	obə́ dií m̄bɛ́	*Don't close the door.*
(this study)	obə́di ḿbɛ̄	*Don't close the door.*

As can be seen from the above examples, the same basic tone pattern, low high mid, occurs in both cases; but the various tones of the pattern occur on different syllables.

Locative-stative verbs do not occur in the jussive since only action verbs occur in the jussive. Locative-stative verbs must become action verbs before occurring in the jussive. See the section on the verbal extension /-b/. In the jussive, for example, one must always set oneself down, one cannot sit down.

Cohortative: First-Person-Plural Imperative:

The cohortative is formed by an imperative plus a jussive or by an /Ń̩-/, i.e. a high-toned syllabic nasal prefix.

zaá bɪ̄di	*Let's eat.*
boó bɪ̄di	*Hurry up, let's eat.*
boónə biíkə	*Hurry up, let's eat.*
ŋ́kə̄lə́(g)	*Let's go.*

/zaá bɪ̄di/, *Let's eat(.)*, literally *come, we should eat*, is a common way of making a cohortative. /boó bɪ̄di/, *Hurry up, let's eat (.)*, is literally *do, we should eat.* /boó bɪ̄di/ implies *do what you have to do quickly and then let's go eat.*

Nekes reports forms like /zaá biídi/ and /boó biídi/ (p. 185), but the informant used for this study does not use these. He uses the forms given in the table above, which are clearly contractions of the older forms given by Nekes, i.e. the older /bií-/ has contracted to /bī-/ with a low high assimilating to mid and the double vowel contracting to a single vowel.

Third-Person Imperative: Third-Person Requests

A third-person imperative can be formed by adding the third-person singular or plural verb-subject prefixes with a high tone to the imperative singular. The third-person imperative means *have/make someone(s) do something*. Third person imperatives in Ewondo are also a way of answering third-person requests, i.e. requests relayed by an intermediary. For example, for a third-person request like:

Bɔ́ŋgɔ́ bádzó naa bə́bɔ ee bikoan.	*They boys asked what they should do with the plantains.*

which contains an indirect question in the jussive, a response in the third-person imperative would probably be used, e.g.

B[illegible]dzáá(g).	*Have/Let them eat them.* *They can/may eat them.*

Indirect or Conditional Inceptive Imperative:

An indirect or conditional type of imperative occurs with a jussive plus an inceptive. The meaning is *If someone asks/wants you to do something, then begin doing it right away.*

Ng(ə́) ádzō ee wo náa ókə, okə́.	*If he asks you to go, (then) go right away.*

The /ókə/ is jussive and the /okə́/ is inceptive. A more literal translation would be *If he says to you that you should go, then start leaving right away.* (/ŋgə́ adzó/ contracts to /ŋg ádzō/.)

Rhetorical Imperative:

The inceptive is also used as a rhetorical imperative to challenge another person, especially a critic of the speaker.

Ngə́ mə̄bɔ, okadá.	*If I did it, (then) say so.*

The first clause containing the supposed criticism of the speaker is a hodiernate imperfect past indicative, and the rhetorical challenge is in the inceptive. A more idiomatic translation of the above sentence would be *If I really did do it, then go ahead and say so.*

The tone on the verb-subject prefix of /mə̄bɔ/ is unexplainable in terms of the rules on tone previously given above. /məbɔ/ would be the expected form for the hodiernate past. Nekes gives /məə́bɔ/ for the hodiernate past and /məhə́bɔ/ for the hodiernate imperfect past (pp. 152-153), but these two forms are both hodiernate imperfect pasts for all the informants used for this study. It would seem that there is here a case of dialect mixture or dialect change since /məə́bɔ/ could contract to /mə̄bɔ/, as previously discussed, but there is no apparent explanation if one starts with the form /məbɔ/. Since the main speaker used for this study is a young man who grew up in Yaoundé since independence from the metropole powers, the writer assumes, for the time being at least, the reason for this mid-tone form is dialect mixture. However, it may be that the speaker did use a hodiernate imperfect past instead of a hodiernate past. If such is the case, then the change to mid tone is explainable according to the rules given above; and this is a case of dialect divergence where one dialect uses an imperfect in the rhetorical imperative and the other doesn't.

Optative:

The optative expresses *a wish*. It is followed by /ki(g)/, but it is not a negative. The subject-verb prefix and the first vowel of the verb stem have the same tones as in the indicative, but all syllables after the first stem vowel have high tones. If the verb stem is monosyllabic, the stem vowel is repeated with a high tone.

məbalá ki	*I wish I could weed.*
bə́yámá ki	*They wish they could cook.*
owulú ki	*You wish you could walk.*
akɔ́bɔ́ ki	*He wishes he could talk.*
abomə́ló	*He wishes he could hammer.*

Auxiliary Verbs

In addition to the present, past, and future auxiliaries, Ewondo has a very extensive system of auxiliary verbs, including multiple auxiliaries. Since some of the auxiliaries also occur as main verbs, such forms could be considered serial verbs; but these verb phrases in Ewondo are not structured like the serial verbs of the non-Bantu languages of West Africa.

There seems to be a lot of variation in usage of auxiliaries by speakers of Ewondo. Without doubt, auxiliaries from other dialects of the Ewondo-Bulu dialect cluster are used rather often in Ewondo; and speakers of Ewondo usually seem to be aware of this. For example, many speakers of Ewondo will say that /və/, *can, be able to*, is "pure Eton" and that Ewondo has only /nə dzam/ for *can, be able to*. Likewise, some speakers will say that /timan/, *do again*, is Bulu; but some Ewondo do use this form, no doubt because of the influence of Bulu. Nevertheless, it seems that most Ewondo use /dúgan/ for *do again*.

The writer realizes that the following lists of auxiliaries cannot be exhaustive since the use of auxiliary verbs is a living, creative part of the Ewondo language; however, the lists do contain, except for the high-frequency tense and future auxiliaries, most of the auxiliaries that one is likely to hear.

The first list is that of the auxiliaries that do not now occur as independent verbs, at least in the speech of the main informant used in this study. Without doubt, most, if not all, of these auxiliaries were independent verbs in the not-too-distant past. It has been suggested to the writer by one of the informants used for this study that there are really just adverbs. It does not seem to the writer that this is yet the case because these auxiliaries still have many more verb-like qualities than noun-like qualities.

Auxiliaries Not Occurring As Independent Verbs

bad	*again, iterative*	baddí	*eat (some food) again*
fam	*do almost/nearly*	famdí	*almost eat*
fíáŋan	*in spite of*	fíáŋandí	*eat in spite of*
kad	*habitually*	kaddí	*usually eat*
mbá	*always be*	m̀bádī	*always eating*
ndɛm	*recently*	ndɛmdí	*have just eaten*
ndzí	*know; not*	ndzí ki dí	*not eat*
tám	*first, previously*	támdī	*eat beforehand*

tóán	*properly, carefully, well*	tóándī	*eat properly*
vól(o)	*fast, quickly*	vóldī	*eat fast*

The auxiliaries ending in a consonant often have an intrusive /əə́/ between them and a verb stem beginning with a consonant, e.g. /fíáŋanəədī/, *eat in spite of*.

Auxiliaries Also Occurring As Independent Verbs

bəm	*last, remain, want*	bəmdí	*eat a long time, keep on eating*
bulu	*increase, multiply*	bulúdī	*eat more food, increase eating*
daŋ	*pass, surpass*	daŋdí	*eat more than someone*
diŋ	*love, like*	diŋdí	*like to eat*
dúgan	*return, come back*	dúgaándī	*eat a meal again/over*
kʊ	*go, leave*	kədí	*be on the way to eat*
kún	*do early*	kúndī	*eat early*
man	*finish*	mandí	*finish eating*
tád(i)	*start, begin*	táddī	*start to eat*
vaŋ, vɛɛ	*plan, project, consider*	vaŋdí, vɛɛdí	*eat intentionally*
vəɟələ	*draw, design*	yəgəəldī	*dare to eat*
yiɛn	*necessary, appropriate*	yiɛ́ndī	*be appropriate to eat*
yəgə	*learn*	yəgə́dī	*eat something for the first time*
zu	*arrive, come*	zudí, sódī	*come to eat*

One informant used in this study completely rejected the meaning of *start, begin* for /tád(i)/ and insisted that /matáaddi/ means *I am eating/will eat (something) for the first time.*

/ŋgə́lə/ is another independent verb that serves as an auxiliary, but it is followed by a subsecutive verb, e.g. /məŋgə́l(ə́) mə̄ndzáa/, *I am/was still eating.* See the section on subsecutive verbs for details.

Habitual Present With /kad/: Regularly:

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	makaddí	*I usually eat*		biákaddí	*we usually eat*
2nd.pers.	wakaddí	*you usually eat*		miákaddí	*we usually eat*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	akaddí	*he/she usually eats*	Cl.2	bákaddí	*they usually eat*
Cl.3	wákaddí	*it usually eats*	Cl.4	myákaddí	*they usually eat*
Cl.5	lákaddí	*it usually eats*	Cl.6	mákaddí	*they usually eat*
Cl.7	yákaddí	*it usually eats*	Cl.8	byákaddí	*they usually eat*
Cl.9	yakaddí	*it usually eats*	Cl.10	yákaddí	*they usually eat*
Cl.11	wákaddí	*it usually eats*	Cl.5	lákaddí	*they usually eat*

In Class 6, there is an alternate form /mə́kaddí/. Another common translation of the habitual present is *be used to*, e.g. /makaddí/, *I am used to eating.*

Habitual Present Negative:

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	maákaád ki dí	*I don't usually eat*		biákaád ki dí	*we don't usually eat*
2nd. pers.	waákaád ki dí	*you don't usually eat*		miákaád ki dí	*you don't usually eat*
3rd. pers.					
Cl.1	aákaád ki dí	*he/she doesn't usually eat*	Cl.2	bakaád ki dí	*they don't usually eat*
Cl.3	wákaád ki dí	*it doesn't usually eat*	Cl.4	myákaád ki dí	*they don't usually eat*
Cl.5	lákaád ki dí	*it doesn't usually eat*	Cl.6	mákaád ki dí	*they don't usually eat*
Cl.7	yákaád ki dí	*it doesn't usually eat*	Cl.8	byákaád ki dí	*they don't usually eat*
Cl.9	yaákaád ki dí	*it doesn't usually eat*	Cl.10	yákaád ki dí	*they don't usually eat*
Cl.11	wákaád ki dí	*it doesn't usually eat*	Cl.5	lákaád ki dí	*they don't usually eat*

In the orthography, /maákaád ki dí/ is written "măkăd ki dí". In Class 6, there is an alternate form, /mə́kaád ki dí/.

Habitual Hodiernate Past

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	məə́kadgədí	*I usually ate*		biíkadgədí	*we usually ate*
2nd.pers.	oókadgədí	*you usually ate*		miíkadgədí	*you usually ate*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	aákadgədí	*he/she usually ate*	Cl.2	bə́kadgədí	*they usually ate*
Cl.3	ókadgədí	*it usually ate*	Cl.4	míkadgədí	*they usually ate*
Cl.5	ákadgədí	*it usually ate*	Cl.6	mə́kadgədí	*they usually ate*
Cl.7	íkadgədí	*it usually ate*	Cl.8	íkadgədí	*they usually ate*
Cl.9	iíkadgədí	*it usually ate*	Cl.10	íkadgədí	*they usually ate*
Cl.11	ókadgədí	*it usually ate*	Cl.5	ákadgədí	*they usually ate*

In the first-person singular, there is an alternate form /maákadgədí/; and in Class 6, /mákadgədí/. The negative of the habitual past is /məə́kadgəə́ ki dí/, etc., *I didn't used to eat, I didn't usually eat*, etc.

Recent Past and Remote Past Habituals

The recent past habitual is /məmbə́ kadgədí/, *I usually ate, I used to eat*; and the remote past habitual is /məŋgábə́ kadgədí/, *I usually ate, I used to eat.* Negatives are /məmbə́ kargəə́ ki dí/ and /məŋgábə́ kadgəə́ ki dí/, *I used to eat.*

Immediate Past: Have Just Done:

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	məndəmdí	*I have just eaten*		biíndəmdí	*we have just eaten*
2nd.pers.	ondəmdí	*you have just eaten*		miíndəmdí	*you have just eaten*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	andəmdí	*he/she has just eaten*	Cl.2	bə́ndəmdí	*they have just eaten*
Cl.3	óndəmdí	*it has just eaten*	Cl.4	míndəmdí	*they have just eaten*
Cl.5	ándəmdí	*it has just eaten*	Cl.6	mə́ndəmdí	*they have just eaten*
Cl.7	índəmdí	*it has just eaten*	Cl.8	índəmdí	*they have just eaten*
Cl.9	indəmdí	*it has just eaten*	Cl.10	índəmdí	*they have just eaten*
Cl.11	óndəmdí	*it has just eaten*	Cl.5	ándəmdí	*they have just eaten*

In Class 6, there is an alternate form /mándəmdí/. The exact time frame for the immediate past varies with the semantics of particular verbs. Since humans eat often, /məndəmdí/, *I have just eaten,* refers to from an instant ago up to about two hours ago; but, obviously, with other verbs, such an /suan/, *arrive*, and /lúg/, *marry*, the time frame could be longer ago than just two hours.

Immediate Past Negative:

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	məə́ndəə́m ki dí	*I haven't just eaten*		biíndəə́m ki dí	*we haven't just eaten*
2nd.pers.	oóndəə́m ki dí	*you haven't just eaten*		miíndəə́m ki dí	*you haven't just eaten*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	aándəə́m ki dí	*he/she has not just eaten*	Cl.2	bə́ndəə́m ki dí	*they haven't just eaten*
Cl.3	óndəə́m ki dí	*it hasn't just eaten*	Cl.4	miíndəə́m ki dí	*they haven't just eaten*
Cl.5	ándəə́m ki dí	*it hasn't just eaten*	Cl.6	məə́ndəə́m ki dí	*they haven't just eaten*
Cl.7	índəə́m ki dí	*it hasn't just eaten*	Cl.8	índəə́m ki dí	*they haven't just eaten*
Cl.9	iíŋdəə́m ki dí	*it hasn't just eaten*	Cl.10	índəə́m ki dí	*they haven't just eaten*
Cl.11	óndəə́m ki dí	*it hasn't just eaten*	Cl.5	ándəə́m ki dí	*they haven't just eaten*

In Class 6, there is an alternate form /maándəə̣m ki dí/.

Inchoative: Start/Begin To Do:

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	mətáddI	*I am starting to eat*		bitáddI	*we are starting to eat*
2nd.pers.	otáddI	*you are starting to eat*		mitáddI	*you are starting to eat*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	atáddI	*he/she is starting to eat*	Cl.2	bətáddI	*they are starting to eat*
Cl.3	ótáddI	*it is starting to eat*	Cl.4	mítáddI	*they are starting to eat*
Cl.5	átáddI	*it is starting to eat*	Cl.6	mətáddI	*they are starting to eat*
Cl.7	ítáddI	*it is starting to eat*	Cl.8	ítáddI	*they are starting to eat*
Cl.9	itáddI	*it is starting to eat*	Cl.10	ítáddI	*they are starting to eat*
Cl.11	ótáddI	*it is starting to eat*	Cl.5	átáddI	*they are starting to eat*

In the first-person singular, there is an alternate form /matáddI/; and in Class 6, an alternate form /mátáddI/.

Inchoative Negative:

	singular		plural
1st.pers.	mandzí ki táddI *I am not starting to eat*		byandzí ki táddI *we are not starting to eat*
2nd.pers.	ondzí ki táddI *you are not starting to eat*		myandzí ki táddI *you are not starting to eat*
3rd.pers.			
Cl.1	andzí ki táddI *he/she is not starting to eat*	Cl.2	bəndzí ki táddI *they are not starting to eat*
Cl.3	óndzí ki táddI *it is not starting to eat*	Cl.4	míndzí ki táddI *they are not starting to eat*
Cl.5	ándzí ki táddI *it is not starting to eat*	Cl.6	məndzí ki táddI *they are not starting to eat*
Cl.7	índzí ki táddI *it is not starting to eat*	Cl.8	índzí ki táddI *they are not starting to eat*
Cl.9	indzí ki táddI *it is not starting to eat*	Cl.10	índzí ki táddI *they are not starting to eat*
Cl.11	óndzí ki táddI *it is not starting to eat*	Cl.5	ándzí ki táddI *they are not starting to eat*

In the first-person singular, there is an alternate form /məndzí ki táddI/; and in Class 6, an alternate form /mándzí ki táddI/.

Negatives With Two Auxiliaries:

When there are two auxiliaries, as in the inceptive negative, /ki(g)/ occurs between the auxiliaries, as in /mándzí ki táddI/.

Order of Auxiliaries:

The order of the auxiliaries is not fixed. Especially /kad/ seems to be able to precede or follow other auxiliaries.

mataámkaáddi	*I always eat beforehand.*
mə́kadgətámdi	*I used to eat beforehand.*
meetámkaáddi	*I will be used to eating beforehand.*

Future Habitual:

The definite future habitual is /mayikadə́dí/ or /meekadə́dí/, *I will usually eat*; and the negative is /maáyií ki kadə́dɪ/ or /meé ki kadə́dɪ/, *I will not usually eat*. The probable future habitual is /məŋgákaáddɪ/ or /məŋgakadə́dɪ/, *I probably will not usually eat*; and the negative is /məə́ŋkaád ki dí/ or /məə́ŋkadə́ ki dí/, *I probably will not usually eat*. Where the informant used for this study has /məə́ŋ-/ in the first two syllables of the negative, other speakers have /maáŋ-/. The indefinite future negative is /məŋgákaáddɪ/ or /məŋgákadə́dɪ/, *I will maybe usually eat*; and the negative is /məŋgákaád ki dí/ or /məŋgákadə́ ki dí/, *I will maybe not usually eat*. The conjugation of the future habituals is quite regular; however, it should be noted that there is a mid tone on /-gā-/ in the indefinite future after a high-toned verb-subject prefix, e.g. /bə́ŋgākaáddɪ/, *they will maybe usually eat*.

Potential: Capability: /dzam/

To express the meanings *can, be able to,* Ewondo uses the Class 5 noun /dzam/, *thing, matter, affair, concern, state of affairs*, in a phrase with /nə/, *BE*, plus another verb.

mənə dzaám kə	*I can go.*
məsí ki dzaám kə	*I cannot go.*
ndzaag inə dzaám dīgiban aná	*The wood can be burnt today.*
məsí ki dzaám bə̄g izímbí dzɪ	*I cannot carry this chest.*

/mənə dzaám kə/ literally means *I am (in) state (to) go*, or perhaps more clearly *I am (of) matter/capability (to) go*; but a good translation is *I can go* or *I am capable of going*.

Habituals with /-ya/:

Habitual verbs can also be formed with /-ya/, *already*, and the meaning is similar to a present perfect in English. (/-ya/ often goes to /-yə/.)

məkadyəə́dɪ	*I have usually been eating* *I have already got used to eating* *I have been in the habit of eating*
madídiya	*I have often been eating recently* *I am already used to eating* *I usually have the habit of eating*

Both of the above forms mean that the subject *usually/regularly does the activity* expressed in the verb stem. /məkadyəə́dɪ/ means *I already have the habit/practice/custom of eating (some food, at some particular* *time/place, etc.)*, and there is no implication of when the custom was started or will end; but /madídya/ means *I have already acquired the habit/custom/practice of eating (some particular food, at some particular time/place, etc.) and I acquired the custom recently and expect to continue custom for an undetermined length of time into the future.*

Analysis Note: Auxiliaries: Independent Words?

Auxiliaries could be considered independent words, since adverbs and pronoun objects can come between the auxiliary and main verb. Noun objects follow the main verb.

Matámkom ḿbɛ̄.	*I am going to fix the door first.*
Mandí ki mó yɛ́n ḿbəŋ.	*I didn't see them (very) well.*

In this grammar, auxiliaries and main verbs are written together as a single compound stem if nothing comes between them, since independent verbs following another verb have a verb-subject prefix.

Məmbə́ malóe miŋkúkúma.	*I was there to call the chiefs.*
Kələ̀ wawulu á ndzɔ́ŋ.	*Go take a walk on the street/road.*

SUBSECUTIVE

The subsecutive is a stative form of a verb which means that *an action takes/took place* or *a state/condition exists/existed.* It is a timeless form which can refer to any time in the present or past. It does not have aspect, but it may translate as perfect, imperfect, or some other aspect in a particular context. A subsecutive *always follows another verb,* and that verb determines the tense, aspect, etc. It commonly follows some form of /nə/, *BE*; but it occurs after other verbs, especially /ŋgə́lə/, *be still/yet.* The verb-subject prefix is usually repeated with the subsecutive verb form.

The mark of the subsecutive is a suffix /-g/, e.g. /dzáag/, *eat*; but the /-g/ is nearly always dropped. It does remain however if another suffix beginning with a vowel is added after /-g/. It sometimes remains in sentence-final position.

Subsecutive with /ŋgə́lə/:

	Singular	plural
1st. pers.	məŋgə́l(ə́) mōdzáa *I am/was still eating*	biŋgə́l(ə́) bīdzáa *we are/were still eating*
2nd pers.	oŋgə́l(ə́) ōdzáa *you are/were still eating*	miŋgə́l(ə́) mīdzáa *you are/were still eating*
3rd pers.		
	Class 1 aŋgə́l(ə́) ādzáa *he/she is/was still eating*	Class 2 bə́ŋgə́l(ə́) bədzáa *they are/were still eating*
	Class 3 óŋgə́l(ə́) ódzáa *it is/was still eating*	Class 4 míŋgə́l(ə́) mídzáa *they are/were still eating*
	Class 5 áŋgə́l(ə́) ádzáa *it is/was still eating*	Class 6 mə́ŋgə́l(ə́) mídzáa *they are/were still eating*
	Class 7 íŋgə́l(ə́) ídzáa *it is/was still eating*	Class 8 bíŋgə́l(ə́) bídzáa *they are/were still eating*
	Class 9 iŋgə́l(ə́) īdzáa *it is/was still eating*	Class 10 íŋgə́l(ə́) ídzáa *they are/were still eating*
	Class 11 óŋgə́l(ə́) ódzáa *it is/was still eating*	Class 5 áŋgə́l(ə́) ádzáa *they are/were still eating*

/ŋgə́lə/, *be still/yet (here/there)*, goes to /ŋgə́lə́/ if followed by a high tone in the first or second syllable after it in the sentence.

The lowed-tone verb prefix with the second verb stem is raised to mid since it is a single low tone after two (or more) highs and before a high, e. g. /məŋgə́l(ə́) mədzáa/ goes to /məŋgə́l(ə́) mə̄dzáa/; but, in the negative, /məŋgə́l(ə́) ki mədzáa/, *I am not eating yet, I am still not eating,* the tone of the second /mə-/ prefix remains low since there is a sequence of two lows. In the plural negative, /bəŋgə́l(ə́) kī bə́dzáa/, *they are not eating yet,* /kī/ is raised to mid since it is a single low between highs. The other forms of the negative with /ŋgə́lə/ follow the same tone patterns.

Another common negative with /ŋgə́lə/ is /məŋgə́lə tə dí/, *I have never eaten/have not previously eaten/have not yet eaten (some food).* /tə/ means *without, not with any.*

If /fə/, *also, more,* is used in the sentence, the negative /ki/ follows the last verb form, e.g. /maŋgə́lə́ dzáā kī fə/, *I am not eating anymore/any longer.*

The informant used for this study has a strong preference for the forms /məŋgə́l (ə́) mə̄dzáa(g)/, etc.; but he knows the shorter forms with only one verb-subject prefix, i.e. /məŋgə́l dzáa(g)/ , etc.

Subsecutives: With /ŋgə́lə/:

Low-Toned Monosyllabic Stems:

bɔ	məŋgə́lə́ məbɔ(g)	*I am still doing*
bi	məŋgə́lə́ məbi(g)	*I am still catching*
yi	məŋgə́lə́ məyi(g)	*I still want*
koe	məŋgə́lə́ məkoge(g)	*I am still setting on fire*
kə	məŋgə́lə́ məkələ(g)	*I am still going*
lad	məŋgə́lə́ məlada(g)	*I am still sewing*
lod	məŋgə́lə́ məlodo(g)	*I am still passing by*
ta(g)	məŋgə́lə́ mətaa(g)	*I am still happy*
sug	məŋgə́lə́ məsugu(g)	*I am still greeting*
kus	məŋgə́lə́ məkusu(g)	*I am still buying*

High-Toned Monosyllabic Stems:

dzó	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄dzóo(g)	*I am still talking*
tsɑ́g	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄tsɑ́ɑ(g)	*I am still stamping my feet*
búg	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄bugu(g)	*I am still breaking*
wóé	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄wóe(g)	*I am still killing*
kúí	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄kúi(g)	*I am still going out*
lób	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄lóbo(g)	*I am still biting*
fɑ́(g)	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄fɑ́ɑ(g)	*I am still digging*
lúg	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄lúgu(g)	*I am still getting married*
líg	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄lígi(g)	*I am still leaving behing/ forgetting*
wóg	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄wógo(g)	*I am still hearing*
túb	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄túbu(g)	*I am still running away*
dzóɑ(g)	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄dzóɑ(g)	*I am still swimming*

Low-Toned Bisyllabic Stems:

woe	məŋgə́lə́ məwoge	*I am still laughing*
lugu	məŋgə́lə́ məlugu	*I am still praising*
yɑɛ, yɑɑ	məŋgə́lə́ məyɑɑgi	*I am still scratching*
dii	məŋgə́lə́ mədii	*I am still closing*
wulu	məŋgə́lə́ məwulu(gu)	*I am still walking*
kələ, kəle	məŋgə́lə́ məkələge	*I am still hanging up*
kole	məŋgə́lə́ məkoləge	*I am still borrowing*
bədə	məŋgə́lə́ məbədəgə	*I am still laying upon*
kɑdɑ	məŋgə́lə́ məkɑdəgə	*I am still used to doing*
tɔbɔ	məŋgə́lə́ mətoɑ́	*I am still sitting*
bəgə	məŋgə́lə́ məbəge	*I am still carrying*
vɑɛ, vɑɑ	məŋgə́lə́ məvɑgɑ	*I am still moving*

Nekes gives (p.161) and the writer would have expected /tɔbɔgɔ/ for the subsecutive of /tɔbɔ/, but the informant used for this study does not use it.

High-Toned Bisyllabic Stems:

kɔ́bɔ	mə̄ŋgə́lə́ mə̄kɔ́bəgɔ	*I am still talking*
lígi	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄lígi	*I am still staying behind*
kúli	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄kúləgi	*I am still removing*
búgi	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄búgi	*I am still breaking (body part)*
tə́lə	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄tɛ́ləgə	*I am still standing (something) up*
yɑ́ɛ	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄yɑ́ɑ́gi	*I am still opening*
síli	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄síligi	*I am still asking*
yə́lə	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄yɛ́ləge	*I am still flying away*
kɑ́lɑ	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄kɑ́ləgɑ	*I am still protecting*
dígi	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄dígi	*I am still burning*
dími	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄dími	*I am still making mistakes*
yə́ge	məŋgə́lə́ məyəəge	*I am still learning*

Low-Toned Monosyllabic Stems Ending in Nasals:

dɑŋ	məŋgə́lə́ mədɑŋɑ	*I am still crossing*
diŋ	məŋgə́lə́ mədiŋi	*I am still loving*
nɔŋ	məŋgə́lə́ mənɔŋɔ	*I am still taking*
tun	məŋgə́lə́ mətunu	*I am still skinning*
fɛn	məŋgə́lə́ məfənə	*I am still plaiting*
tum	məŋgə́lə́ mətumu	*I am still burning*
bum	məŋgə́lə́ məbumu	*I am still roasting over a fire*
sɔm	məŋgə́lə́ məsɔmɔ	*I am still finding*
mɑn	məŋgə́lə́ məmɑnɑ	*I am still finishing*

High-Toned Monosyllabic Stems Ending in Nasals:

láŋ	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄láŋa	*I am still counting*
lóŋ	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄lóŋo	*I am still building*
yáŋ	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄yáŋa	*I am still frying*
yɛ́n	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄yɛ́nə	*I am still seeing*
lɔ́ŋ	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄lɔ́ŋɔ	*I am still crowing*
hán	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄hána	*I am still choosing*
yám	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄yáma	*I am still cooking*
dím	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄dími	*I am still extinguishing*
kám	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄káma	*I am still wondering*
tám	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄táma	*I am still wishing*
ɲɔŋ	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄ɲɔ́ŋɔ	*I am still floating*

/yám/ is transitive, i.e. means *cook something*. /bə́/ is intransitive, e.g. /bidí bíŋgə́lə́ bíbée/, *the food is still cooking.*

Bisyllabic Derived Stems Ending in Nasals:

timi	məŋgə́lə́ mətimiŋi	*I am still explaining*
ndami	məŋgə́lə́ məndamaŋi	*I am still spreading out*
wome	məŋgə́lə́ məwoməŋe	*I am still shedding skin*
namba	məŋgə́lə́ mənambəga	*I am still touching*
bómbo	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄búo	*I am still lying down*
lúmbu	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄lúu	*I am still bending over*

Derived Verb Stems With the /-an/ Suffix:

ndáman	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄ndáman	*I am still ruining*
diŋan	biŋgə́lə́ bídiŋan	*We still love each other*
liŋan	məŋgə́lə́ məliŋan	*I am still angry*
lúman	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄lúman	*I am still fighting*
báman	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄báman	*I am still laying together*

kilan	məŋgə́lə́ məkilan	*I am still turning*
tsídan	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄tsídəgan	*I am still chasing after*
yáan	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄yáan	*I am still paying*
kóan	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄kóan	*I am still collecting*
ɲoan	məŋgə́lə́ məɲoan	*I am still extending (my limb)*

Polysyllabic Stems:

kogolo	məŋgə́lə́ məkogolo	*I am still increasing*
yə́gələ	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄yə́gələ	*I am still teaching*
kogəlán	məŋgə́lə́ məkogəlán	*I am still begging*
lúnəbu	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄lúnəbu	*I am still getting angry*

Stems That Retain /-a/ in the Subsecutive:

zu	məŋgə́lə́ məzaa	*I am still coming*
dí	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄dzáa	*I am still eating*
ku	məŋgə́lə́ məkuu	*I am still falling*
ɲú	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄ɲáa	*I am still drinking*
və́	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄váa	*I am still giving*
wú	məŋgə́lə́ mə̄wáa	*I am still dying*

As noted above, the subsecutive is often used in narrative. Consequently, a subsecutive form may occur in a slot or position where other verbs usually occur. This sometimes leads native speakers, especially language informants being queried by linguistics researchers, to conclude that a particular subsecutive form is the grammatical and semantic equivalent of a particular independent verb form. Since subsecutive forms are tenseless and aspectless as discussed above, a subsecutive form could of course have any of a number of meanings, as determined by context. Thus, in a particular context, an independent verb and a subsecutive could have the same meaning or translation. (To a native speaker assisting with linguistic research, *have the same meaning* means *have the same translation.*)

Subsecutive Habituals:

Subsecutives can follow an independent verb such as a form of /nə/, *BE,* and thereby be part of a verb phrase that has tense and aspect. When this occurs, this is a subsecutive habitual, meaning something *usually/habitually/regularly done.* The habitual subsecutive can also follow other independent habitual verbs, such as one with /kad/ or a reduplicated form with the /-ya/ suffix.

The present subsecutive habitual is /mənə mədzáa/, etc., *I usually/regularly/habitually eat/am eating, I am used to eating,* etc. The hodiernate past subsecutive habitual is /mabə́ mə̄dzáa/ or /məbə́ mə̄dzáa/, etc, *I usually ate/was eating, I used to eat/was used to eating,* etc. The recent past subsecutive habitual is /məmbə́ mə̄dzáa/, *I usually ate, I used to eat,* etc. The remote past subsecutive habitual is /məŋgábə́ mə̄dzáa/, etc., *I usually ate, I used to eat.*

Be Always: Be Still

The verbs /ŋgə́lə/ and /m̀báá/ are quite similar. /ŋgə́lə/ means *be still doing, continue doing, has/have not stopped doing/being yet;* but /m̀báá/ means *be still doing, continue doing, will continue doing/being for an indefinite (long/short) period.* Thus, though the translation in a particular context may be the same, /ŋgə́lə/ focuses on *the not stopping,* but /m̀báá/ focuses on *the continuing.*

məŋgə́lə	*I am still here.* *I haven't left yet.*
məŋgə́lə mə̄dzáa	*I am still eating.* *I haven't quit eating yet.*
məŋgə́lə	*I am still living/alive.* *I haven't died yet.*
məmbáá vá	*I am still here.* *I am staying here still.*
məmbáá mətoá	*I always sit down.* *I sit down all the time.*
məmbáá ɲyə́gələ	*I will always be the teacher.*

See also the discussion of /m̀báá/ in the section on the imperfect future.

Hodiernate Past Subsecutive Habitual:

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	mabə́ mə̄dzáa	*I was eating*		bibə́ bīdzáa	*we were eating*
2nd.pers.	obə́ ə̄dzáa	*you were eating*		mibə́ mīdzáa	*you were eating*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	abə́ ə̄dzáa	*he/she was eating*	Cl.2	bə́bə́ bə́dzáa	*they were eating*
Cl.3	óbə̄ ódzáa	*it was eating*	Cl.4	míbə́ mídzáa	*they were eating*
Cl.5	ábə̄ ádzáa	*it was eating*	Cl.6	mə́bə́ mə́dzáa	*they were eating*
Cl.7	íbə̄ ídzáa	*it was eating*	Cl.8	bíbə́ bídzáa	*they were eating*
Cl.9	ibə́ īdzáa	*it was eating*	Cl.10	íbə́ ídzáa	*they were eating*
Cl.11	óbə̄ ódzáa	*it was eating*	Cl.5	ábə́ ádzáa	*they were eating*

There is an alternate form in Class 6, /mábə́ mádzáa/. In the uncontracted form, the verb-subject prefix is repeated with the second verb stem.

Hodiernate Past Imperfect: Contracted Form 1:

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.	mabə́dzāa	*I was eating*		bibə́dzāa	*we were eating*
2nd.pers.	obə́dzāa	*you were eating*		mibə́dzāa	*you were eating*
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	abə́dzāa	*he/she was eating*	Cl.2	bə́bə̄dzāa	*they were eating*
Cl.3	óbə̄dzāa	*it was eating*	Cl.4	míbə̄dzāa	*they were eating*
Cl.5	ábə̄dzāa	*it was eating*	Cl.6	mə́bə̄dzāa	*they were eating*
Cl.7	íbə̄dzāa	*it was eating*	Cl.8	bíbə̄dzāa	*they were eating*
Cl.9	ibə́dzāa	*it was eating*	Cl.10	íbə̄dzāa	*they were eating*
Cl.11	óbə̄dzāa	*it was eating*	Cl.5	ábə̄dzāa	*they were eating*

There is an alternate form in Class 6, /mábə̄dzāa/. In contracted form 1, the verb-subject prefix is not repeated.

Hodiernate Past Imperfect: Contracted Form 2:.

	singular			plural	
1st.pers.					
2nd.pers.	obódzɑ̄ɑ	*you were eating*			
3rd.pers.					
Cl.1	ɑbɑ́dzɑ̄ɑ	*he/she was eating*			
Cl.3	óbódzɑ̄ɑ	*it was eating*			
Cl.5	ɑ́bɑ́dzɑ̄ɑ	*it was eating*			
Cl.7	íbídzɑ̄ɑ	*it was eating*			
Cl.9	ibídzɑ̄ɑ	*it was eating*	Cl.10	íbídzɑ̄ɑ	*they were eating*
Cl.11	óbódzɑ̄ɑ	*it was eating*	Cl.5	ɑ́bɑ́dzɑ̄ɑ	*they were eating*

In contracted form 2, the verb-subject prefix is repeated; and the vowel of /bə/is elided before a vowel subject-prefix of the second verb stem. Consequently, contracted form 2 occurs only in those forms that have a vowel subject-prefix.

The negative is /mɑbə́ ki mədzɑ́ɑ/ or /məbə́ ki mədzɑ́ɑ/, etc., *I wasn't eating*, etc. The negative is regular and takes the same prefixes as /mənə/. Apparently, contracted forms are avoided in the negative.

It is very difficult to judge from the speech of and discussions with a single speaker; but apparently the uncontracted forms are more common in the plural and the contracted forms more common in the singular. The two contracted forms in the singular seem to occur with about equal frequency; but perhaps those with /ə/ occur a bit more often than the other forms.

There are also other variants in the negative. The writer has also heard /məbə́ mədzɑ́ɑ ki/. The main informant used for this study says it is the same as /məbə́ ki mədzɑ̄ɑ/. Since /məbə́ mədzɑ́ɑ ki/ has only rarely been heard by the writer, no further analysis has been possible.

Simultaneous and Concurrent Actions:

Two actions that take place at the same time or overlap in time can be expressed with two subsecutive verbs following a form of *BE* in the past; but in the present and future, the first verb would be in the indicative and the second in the subsecutive.

The verbs in the sentences just below are subsecutives following /ŋgábə́/. The first subsecutive is contract with /ŋgábə́/ in what this grammar calls contracted form 2; thus /ɑŋgábə́ ɑdzáɑ/ contracts to /ɑŋgábádzáɑ/. For an explanation of this, see the discussion of contracted form 2 below.

ɑŋgábázáɑ məbɑlɑ	*He was eating and/while I was weeding.*
ɑŋgábázáɑ bə́yámɑ	*He was eating and/while they were cooking.*
ɑŋgábázáɑ owulugu	*He was eating and/while you were walking.*
ɑŋgábázáɑ ɑkɔ́bəgɔ	*He was eating and/while she was talking.*
ɑŋgábádzáɑ məsíe	*He was eating and/while I was working.*

In the present and future, in addition to the first verb being in the indicative, an independent pronoun occurs before the subsecutive.

ɑdí mɑ məsíe	*He is eating and/while I am working.*
eedí mɑ məsíe	*He will be eating and/while I will be working.*

The above forms are all translated into English with imperfects to emphasize that two actions are/were/will be going on at the same time, but the various forms could equally well be translated with simple verb form, e.g. *he ate and/while I worked, he will eat and/while I (will) work.*

IMPERATIVE

The imperative is formed by adding /-ɑ́g/ in the singular and /-ɑ́n/ in the plural; but there are many contractions and elisions, which make the imperatives look far more irregular than they are. In the huge majority of cases, the stem vowel is repeated and occurs instead of the /-ɑ/ of the imperative singular. The final /-g/ nearly always drops for the speaker used for this study. Many other speakers tend to retain the final /-g/ if the imperative is at the end of a sentence; but final /-g/ is always dropped if followed by another word in a sentence.

Older people use the obsolecent ending /-(ə́)nə/ in the plural imperative, /boónə/, *do*, /lɑdə́nə/, *sew*, /kolə́gɑ́n/, *lend, borrow*, /kɔ́bə́nə/, *talk, speak*, and /lı́ı́gə́nə/, *remain, stay behind*.

Low-Toned Monosyllabic Stems

Verb Stem		Imperative Singular	Imperative Plural
bɔ	*make, do*	bɔɔ́(g)	boɑ́n
bi	*catch, seize*	bií(g)	biɑ́n, biɛ́n
yi	*want*	yií(g)	yiɑ́n, yiɛ́n
koe	*set on fire*	koé(g)	koɑ́n
kə	*go, leave*	kələ́(g)	kəlɑ́n, kaŋɑ́n
lɑd	*sew*	lɑdɑ́(g)	lɑdɑ́n
lod	*pass/go by*	lodó(g)	lodɑ́n
tɑ(g)	*be happy*	tɑɑ́(g)	tɑɑ́n
sug	*greet, shake hands*	sugú(g)	sugɑ́n
kus	*buy*	kusú(g),kus, kuú(g)	kusɑ́n

Before another word, the final vowel of an imperative usually becomes /ə/ if not immediately preceded by the stem vowel, e.g. /lɑdɑ́/ usually becomes /lɑdə́/ before another word, but /bií/ does not change. As shown in the section on phonology, /ə/ is often elided. This can leave only the stem, e.g. /lɑ́d/, as the imperative form.

The informant used for this study has several forms that one would not expect from the discussion given above. In the forms with /iɑ/, there has been an assimilation of the /ɑ/ toward the /i/, giving

/biɛ́n/ and /yiɛ́n/. However, there is not a complete assimilation to /ee/ as often happens when the reverse order, i.e. /ai/, occurs.

The form /kogé/ is unexpected and makes one suspect that the stem might have been /kog/, but there is no indication of this in either the Nekes dictionary or grammar. However, if this were the case, one would wonder why the non-occurring form /*koóg/ did not appear since this would be the expected form if a /g/ had been elided in /*kogóg/. Compare the imperatives for /woe/, *laugh*. Perhaps /kogé/ has been influenced by /kóan/, *collect, pile up,* whose imperative is /kógán/, since /kóan/ is used to mean *collect/pile up firewood.*

The full stem for /kə/, *go, leave,* is /kəl/. Since final /l/ nearly always drops, it would only appear regularly in a form like /kələ́(g)/ where there it is not word final. Note also the forms with /ŋ/. /ŋ/ does occur in some forms of the imperative, as shown below; but such occurrences of /ŋ/ are suffixes and not part of a suppletive stem.

Since the /d/ in /ladá/, *sew*, and /lodó/, *pass by*, may be a voiced flap [ɹ], it may be difficult to hear the final vowel; and the hearer may think that he has only heard the flap. Since vowels in this position also tend to devoice, careful listening is required to hear the vowel in this environment.

In /taá(g)/, *be happy*, the medial /g/ has been elided; /tagá(g)/ has become /taá(g)/.

The speaker used in this study has only /s/ in /kusú(g)/, and /kusán/, *buy*, but other speakers have a /z/, i.e. /kuzú(g)/ and /kuzán/.

High-Tone[illegible]osyllabic Stems

Verb Ste[illegible]		Imperative Singular	Imperative Plural
dzó	*say, tell*	dzóó(g)	dzóán
tság	*stamp the feet*	tsáá(g)	tsáán
búg	*break*	búgú(g)	búgán
wóé	*kill*	wóé(g)	wóán
kúí	*go out*	kúí(g)	kúán
lób	*bite*	lóbó(g)	lóbán
fá(g)	*dig*	fáá(g)	fáán
lúg	*marry*	lúgú(g)	lúgán
líg	*leave behind*	lígí(g)	lígán

wóg	*hear, feel*	wógó(g)	wógán
túb	*run away*	túbú(g)	túban
dzóá(g)	*swim*	dzóá(g)	dzóán

The informant used for this study avoids using /-g/ with /dzőő/, *say*, /wőél/, *kill*, and /lígí/, *leave behind, forget*. Some speakers use both /wőé(g)/ and /wőő(g)/ in the imperative singular.

Apparently, some speakers have (or had) a sequence of high mid, e.g. /tsáā(g)/ and /búgū(g)/ where the informant used for this study has only high high. (See Nekes Lehrbuch pp.160-ff.) The writer tried repeatedly to elicit imperatives with a high-mid sequence, but was unable to do so.

Some speakers also have /kűű(g)/, *go out*, as the imperative singular for /kűí/.

Low-Toned Bisyllabic Stems

Verb Stem		Imperative Singular	Imperative Plural
woe	*laugh*	wogé, woó(g)	wogán
lugu	*honor*	lugú	lugán
yaɛ, yaa	*scratch*	yagí	yagán
dii	*close*	digí	digán
wulu	*walk*	wulúgú	wulán
kələ, kəle	*hang up*	kəkə́gə́	kələ́gan
kole	*lend, borrow*	kolə́gə́	kolə́gan
bədə	*lay on top of*	bədə́gə́	bədə́gán
kada	*be used to doing*	kadə́gə́	kadə́gán
tɔbɔ	*set, stay*	tɔbɔ́gɔ́	tɔbə́gán
bəgə	*carry, load;* *dress, put on*	bəgə́	bəgán
vaɛ, vaa	*remove, take away*	vagá	vagán

Nekes reported that /woe/, laugh, /lugu/, honor, praise, /yɑɛ/, scratch (a person/animal), and /dii/close, shut, have a rising tone on the first syllable in the imperative (p. 161). None of the informants used in this study had this tone structure on these words. One informant thought these forms with a rising tone on the first syllable were Eton dialect. Likewise, none of the informants used in this study had a final mid tone on any of the above forms.

High-Toned Bisyllabic Stems

Verb Stem		Imperative Singular	Imperative plural
kɔ́bɔ	*speak, talk*	kɔ́bə́gɔ́	kɔ́bɔ́gán
lígi	*stay behind*	líígī	líígán
kúli	*take out/off*	kúlígí	kúlə́gán
búgi	*break body part*	búúgí	búgán
tə́lə	*be standing*	tə́lə́gə́	tə́lə́gan
yɑ́ɛ	*open*	yɑ́ɑ́gí	yɑ́ɑ́gan
síli	*ask*	sílígí	sílígán
yə́lə	*fly off/away*	yɛ́lə́gə́	yɛ́lə́gán
kɑ́lɑ	*keep, protect*	kɑ́lə́gɑ́	kɑ́lə́gán
dígi	*burn*	díígí	díígan
dími	*make a mistake*	dímí	dimán

There is variation in the middle vowel in several of the above forms. At slow speed, the middle vowel would not change to /ə/ but be the same as the stem vowel. /kɔ́bə́gɔ́/ would be /kɔ́bɔ́gɔ́ /; /kúlígí /, /kúlúgí /; and /kɑ́lə́gɑ́ /, /kɑ́lɑ́gɑ́ /.

Nekes classifies /dími /, make a mistake, as a bisyllabic derived stem which takes /-ŋ / suffixes, e.g. /dímíŋí /, (p. 164); but these /-ŋ / forms for / dími/ are unknown to the informant used for this study.

The forms listed in the table above also occur with a mid tone on the last syllable. /kɔ́bɔ / plus /g/ plus vowel gives /kɔ́bɔgɔ́ / or /kɔ́bəgɔ́ /. This would give /*kɔ́bə̈gɔ́/ when the low between two highs is raised to mid, but this type of form does not occur. There seems to be a metathesis of the tones on the second and third syllable since /kɔ́bə́gɔ̄/ occurs. However, though the informant used for this study knows the form /kɔ́bə́gɔ̄/, he usually uses /kɔ́bə́gɔ́/.

The forms of the imperatives of the derived stems ending in /-ug/ or /-ig/ plus /i/ contain a long vowel in the stem. This results from the elision of the /g/ between two vowels. The imperative singular of /líg/, *leave behind*, is /lígí(g)/. When reflexive-passive /-i/ is added to /líg/ to form /lígi/, *remain behind*, the imperative singular becomes /lígigí/; but the first /g/ is elided and the form contracts to /líígí/ or /líígī/, as explained above.

Low-Toned Monosyllabic Stems Ending in Nasals

Verb Stem		Imperative Singular	Imperative Plural
dɑŋ	*cross over*	dɑŋɑ́	dɑŋɑ́n
diŋ	*love*	diŋí	diŋɑ́n
nɔŋ	*take*	nɔŋɔ́	nɔŋɑ́n
tun	*skin*	tunú	tumɑ́n
fɛn	*plait, braid*	fənə́	fənɑ́n
tum	*burn*	tumú	tumɑ́n
bum	*roast*	bumú	bumɑ́n
sɔm	*find*	sɔmɔ́	sɔmɑ́n
mɑn	*finish*	mɑnɑ́	mɑnɑn

Nekes reports an /-ŋ/ suffix in the imperative singular for stems of the above type, e.g. /dɑŋɑ́ŋ/, *cross over*, and /nɔŋɔ́ŋ/, *take*, (pp.163-164); but this form is unknown to the informants used for this study.

Nekes classifies /mɑn/, *finish*, as a bisyllabic stem with a nasal, i.e. /mɑnɑ/ and having imperative suffixes in /-ŋ/ like the bisyllabic stems with a nasal (p.163); but the informants used in this study used /mɑn/ as a low-toned monosyllabic stem ending in a nasal and taking a high-toned stem vowel suffix in the imperative singular and /-ɑ́n/ in the imperative plural.

High-Toned Monosyllabic Stems Ending in Nasals

Verb Stem		Imperative Singular	Imperative Plural
láŋ	*count, read*	láŋá	láŋán
lóŋ	*build*	lóŋó	lóŋán
yáŋ	*fry*	yáŋá	yáŋán
yɛ́n	*see*	yɛ́nə́	yɛ́nán
lɔ́ŋ	*crow*	lɔ́ŋɔ́	lɔ́ŋán
hán	*want to very much*	háná	hánán
yám	*cook*	yámá	yámán
dím	*extinguish*	dímí	dímán
kám	*wọnder*	kámá	kámán
tám	*wish*	támá	támán
ɲɔ́ŋ	*float*	ɲɔ́ŋá	ɲɔ́ŋán

Nekes also reports an /-ŋ/ suffix in the singular imperative, as in /láŋāŋ/, *count*; but this is unknown to my informants.

Bisyllabic Derived Stems Ending in Nasals

Verb Stem		Imperative Singular	Imperative Plural
timi	*explain*	timíŋí	timíŋán
ndami	*spread out*	ndamíŋí	ndamáŋán
wome	*shed, flake off*	woməŋé	womáŋán
namba	*touch*	nambəgə́	nambə́gán
bómbo	*lie down*	bómbógó	bómbə́gán
lúmbu	*lean/bend over*	lúmbúgú	lúmbə́gán

Nekes put /man/, *finish*, and /dimí/, *make a mistake*, in the above class; but they are not used like this by the informant used in this study, as explained above.

Derived Verb Stems With the /-an/ Suffix

Verb Stem		Imperative Singular	Imperative Plural
ndáman	*spoil, ruin*	ndámán	ndámán
diŋan	*love each other*	-	diŋán
liŋan	*become angry*	liŋán	liŋán
lúman	*fight*	lúmán	lúmán
báman	*lay/put together*	bámán	bámán
kilan	*turn*	kilán	kilán
tsídan	*run/chase after*	tsídán	tsídán
yáan	*pay*	yáán	yáán
kóan	*collect*	kóán	kóán
ɲoan	*extend*	ɲoán	ɲoán

For /kilan/, /tsídan/, /yáan/, /kóan/, and /ɲoan/, Nekes lists the inperatives (same for both singular and plural) /kilə́gān/, /tsídəgān/, /yáágān/, /kóógān/, and /ɲoógān/, respectively (p.165); but these are not known to my informant.

Polysyllabic Stems

Verb Stem		Imperative Singular	Imperative Plural
kogolo	*add, increase*	kogóló	kogə́lán
yə́gələ	*teach*	yə́gə́lə́	yə́gə́lán
kogəlán	*ask, beg*	kogəlán	kogəlán
lúnəbu	*get angry*	lúnə́bú	lúnə́bán

Stems That Retain /-a/ in the Imperative

Verb Stem		Imperative Singular	Imperative Plural
zu	*arrive, come.*	zaá(g)	zaán
dí	*eat*	dzáá(g)	dzáán

ku	*fall*	kuú(g)	kuán
ɲú	*drink*	ɲáá(g)	váán
və́	*give*	váá(g)	váán
wú	*die*	wáá(g)	wáán

First-Person and Third-Person Imperatives:

Most first-person and third-person imperatives are expressed using a form of the jussive. See the discussion on first- and third-person imperatives at the end of the section on jussives.

One type of third-person imperative is formed by adding high-toned verb-subject prefixes to the singular of the imperative. This is also discussed at the end of the section on jussives since this type of third-person imperative is used to respond to indirect questions and indirect requests, which are stated in the jussive.

áyámaŋ, áyám	*Have/Make her/him cook.*
bə́dzáá(g)	*Have/Make them eat.*

Third-person imperatives are expressed in Ewondo by either a jussive or an imperative plus a jussive. See the section on jussives for a discussion of these.

zaá bĪdi	*Let's eat.*
ŋ́kə̄lə́(ġ)	*Let's go.*
mə́di	*I should eat.*

Imperatives With Serial Verbs:

Serial verbs also occur in the imperative, especially with /ke/, *go, leave*, e.g. /kə nɔŋ/, *go get*, *go take*, and /kə kad/, *go tell*. The first verb is in the imperative and following verb(s) in the present indicative.

Kalə́ wawulu á ndzɔ́ŋ.	*Go take a walk on the road/street.*

See also the discussion of the imperative sentence at the end of the section on relative clauses.

ADVERBS

The word class, adverbs, contains a number of subclasses. Some of these are inflected, and some are not. Some subclasses are quite large and can be described as a set of contrasting features, and others are very small subclasses. The subclasses that have contrasting sets of features will be described in detail, but uninflected small classes will be left to the dictionary.

Locative Adverbs:

Locative adverbs are marked for person, i.e. *location in relation to first and second person,* and for exactness versus vagueness, i.e. *an exact or restricted location versus a general area or vicinity.*

vá	*here, by/near speaker*
válā	*there, by/near hearer*
válí	*there, away from both speaker and hearer*
álí	*yonder, away from both speaker and hearer*

The English locative adverb system is based on relative distance from the speaker with *here, there,* and *yonder* starting at the speaker and showing increasing distances from the speaker. The Ewondo system is based on the location of both the speaker and hearer, but there is also a relative-distance concept. /vá/ means *by/near the speaker,* and /válā/ means *by/near the hearer*; but though /válí/ and /álí/ mean *away from both speaker and hearer,* /válí/ means *relatively close to speaker and hearer,* whereas /álí/ means *yonder, far away from both speaker and hearer,* and probably also means *out of sight.*

mű	*around here, somewhere near speaker, in the vicinity of the speaker*
múlū	*around there, somewhere near hearer, in the vicinity of the hearer*
wóé	*around over there, somewhere away from speaker and hearer, in a vicinity away from speaker and hearer*
múlí	*around way over there, somewhere at a distance from speaker and hearer, somewhere in a vicinity at a distance from speaker and hearer*

It is readily apparent that the system with /vɑ́/ means *an exact location*, whereas the system with /mú/, though it shares the same points of reference, viz. speaker and hearer, means *somewhere in the general vicinity or area.* For example, /mú/ would often translate something like *around here somewhere* or *in this general vicinity/area.*

The two systems given above besides meaning *at/in a location* also mean *in/toward the direction of a location,* e.g. *in/to/toward here.*

As in the demonstrative pronouns, these adverbs can also take /-nɑ/ as a suffix, which makes the referent more specific. /vɑ́nɑ́/ means *right there, right by speaker.* It may be difficult to see a difference between /vɑ́/ and /múnɑ́/, but /múnɑ́/ would mean *somewhere right in this specific area* and is still less specific than /vɑ́/, but of course the area referred to is more limited or more specific for /múnɑ́/ than for /mú/.

It should be noted again that forms with /v/ like /vɑ́/ are probably most often said with an [ʌ], e.g. [ʌ́ɑ].

There may be a dialect difference in the usage of /wɛ́é/ and /mûlí/. One informant used for this study claimed that the meanings of these two forms to be the reverse of what is given above. However, since the writer was able to spend only a brief amount of time with this informant, it may be merely a misunderstanding.

Obviously, there is an /-l/-plus-vowel suffix in the second- and third-person locative adverbs. It is probably historically connected with the applicative /-l/-plus-vowel suffix discussed under verb suffixes since both mean *(away) from speaker to another person.*

The locative adverbs also occur with the preposition /ɑ́/, *in, on, at, to.* /ɑ́/ also occurs with the locative adverbs plus /nɑ́/. The adverbial prepositional phrase is a bit more specific than the adverb by itself, but it is a bit difficult to see an exact difference, especially in translation. Since there are important differences in tone in the forms with /ɑ́/ plus adverb, the forms will be listed below, but with only glosses. It should be remembered that the meaning discussion above applies to these forms also. It should also be noted that the forms with a mid tone on the second syllable seem more often to mean *direction,* e.g. /ɑ́vɑ̄/, *to here, in this direction,* whereas forms with a high tone on the second syllable seem more often to mean *location,* e.g. /ɑ́vɑ́/ *at here, in this location.* These are the meanings given below, but it should be noted that my informants showed a lot of disagreement, or perhaps confusion, on this.

ává	*here, at this spot, by speaker*
ávā	*by this way, through here, go to/pass near speaker*
ámú	*here, in this area, around speaker*
ámū	*by this way, through here, go to/pass in vicinity of speaker*
áválā	*there, at that spot, by hearer*
áválá	*by that way, through there, go to/pass near hearer*
ámúlú	*there, in that area, away from hearer*
ámūlú	*by that way, through there, go to/pass in vicinity of hearer*
ávál í	*over there, at that spot over there, away from speaker and hearer*
ávāl í	*by that way over there, through over there, go to/pass by place away from speaker and hearer*
áwóé	*over there, in that area over there, away from speaker and hearer*
áwōé	*by over there, through over there, go to/pass by area away from speaker and hearer*
ál í	*over yonder, at that distant spot, yonder away from speaker and hearer*
ál ī	*by over yonder, through over yonder, go to/pass by place over yonder away from speaker and hearer*
ámúl í	*over yonder, in that area over yonder, over yonder away from speaker and hearer*
ámūl í	*by over yonder, through over yonder, go to/pass by area over yonder away from speaker and hearer*

Probably all the adverbs listed above were formerly independent nouns that have been made into adverbs. One could of course still consider them nouns since they occur as objects of prepositions, but it seems to the writer that this is a case of an adverb becoming or being used as a noun, just as English *here* can be used in noun slots in a sentence. However, there are still independent nouns which occur with the preposition /á/ and function as adverbs very similarly to those adverbs given above.

yób	*sky, heaven; high*	áyób	*up, above, over*
osú	*front; first*	ósū	*in front of, before*
ḿfə́ŋ	*border, edge*	ámfə̄ŋ	*beside, at the side of*
mgbá(g)	*proximity, vicinity*	ámgbá(g)	*near*
zaán	*middle*	ázān	*in the middle, between*
mvú(s)	*back*	ámvú(s)	*in the back, behind*
sí	*ground, earth*	ásí	*down, below, on the ground/floor*

There are also other adverbs which must have formerly been /á/ plus an independent noun, but for which the independent noun has been lost.

áyād	*on the other side; however*
ábə	*at someone's place/house*

It might be that /ábə/ is from /abáá/, *living room, parlor, men's palaver house, meeting room;* but if it is, there have been changes in vowel length, tone, and quality.

Also, a large number of locatives can be formed by /ḿfá(g)/, *side,* plus either the forms with /á/ plus the locatives given at the beginning of this section or with demonstrative pronouns. Since the number of forms is quite large, but easily formed by analogy with the forms at the beginning of this section and the section on demonstrative prounouns, only a few forms will be given here.

ḿfá ya ámú	*by/through this way, around here*
ḿfá ya áhálā	*by/through that way, around there*
ḿfáá ví	*by/through this way, around here*
ḿfáá vílí	*by/through that way, around there*

/ḿfá/ is also used to mark an absolute subject for emphasis.

Ḿfá bīníŋgá, abúí ládiŋ alóŋ.	*As for women, most of them like to fish.*

Locative Adverbial Phrases:

Combinations of locative prepositional phrases and adverbs also occur. Only a short list is given here, since these phrases are quite regular in their formation.

ɑ́yób vɑ́	*up here by speaker*
ɑ́yób vɑ́lɑ̄	*up there by hearer*
ɑ́yób vɑ́lí	*up there away from speaker and hearer*
ɑ́sí vɑ́	*down here by speaker*
ɑ́sí vɑ́lɑ̄	*down there by hearer*
ɑ́sí vɑ́lí	*down there away from speaker and hearer*

Temporal Adverbs:

ɑnɑ́	*today*
okídí	*tomorrow*
oŋgogé, ɑŋgogé	*yesterday*
ódzɑn	*the day before yesterday, the day after tomorrow*
kídí	*morning*
kíkídígi	*(in) early morning(s)*
ŋgogé	*evening, afternoon*
ŋgoóŋgóge, ŋgoóŋgógə́le	*(in) afternoons, evenings*

To distinguish the two possible meanings of /ódzɑn/, one uses /ódzɑ̄n wɑ́zu/, *the day after tomorrow, the odzan that is coming from* /ódzɑ̄n ómbə́lodo/, *the day before yesterday, the odzan that has passed.*

Prepositional phrases consisting of a preposition and a noun are also used as temporal adverbs, especially /ɑbóg/, *time, occasion.* /ɑ́/ *on, at, in, to,* contracts with /ɑbóg/ to give /ɑ́bōg/.

Ndzɑɑg ídígi ɑ́bōg mə́kə.	*The wood was burning when (at the time) I left.*

Numerous other temporal adverbs and adverb phrases also occur. These adverbials occur in an almost-endless variety of combinations, e.g. /dén aná/, *later today*. Given below are many of the most common temporal adverbials.

ítətəg ɲɔ́	*now, at this moment*
válāá	*right now, at this very moment*
dén	*afterwards, later, soon*
itié itié	*right away, immediately*
ámōs dI(ná)	*(on) this day, today*
kóám	*(for) a long time, always, ever*
mvúa, mvúmvúa	*finally, at last, lately*
iban náa	*after a long time*
ókōbá	*in the past*
ámvús vāláá, amvus ye válāá	*after that*
ámōs yə vāláá	*(on) the next/following day*
á tólób	*at noon*
á məwul móbɛ̄	*at two o'clock*
ee záŋ (aḷú)	*around midnight, from about 11:00 p.m. to about 1:00 a.m.*
e wul dá	*around one o'clock; from about 12:00 to about 2:00*

/awulu/, *hour*, has the variants /awəla/ and /awolə/. With a temporal phrase, /á/ means *at a specific time*, and /ee/ means *around/about a time, an hour or so on either side of a time.*

Ago: /ŋgə́....aná/:

/ŋgə́/, *if*, *when*, *that*, has numerous idiomatic uses. When /ŋgə́/ occurs with /aná/, *today*, it means *ago*. /ŋgə́/ and /aná/ are usually separated in a sentence.

Azu aná məlú mám?	*In how many days will he come?*
Azu aná məlú məsaman.	*He will come in six days.*
Ŋgə́ ázu aná məlú mám?	*How many days ago did he come?*
Ŋgə́ ázu aná məlú məsaman.	*He came six days ago.*

At Least: No More Than:

/átəgə/ plus /daŋ/, *cross(over), (sur)pass,* means *at least, no fewer than;* and /təgə/ plus /lọd/, *go/pass by,* means *up to, no more than.*

Bafilkán bə́sə bə́bə̄lə́ biníŋgá bə́bɛ̄ átəgə daŋ. *All Africans have at least two wifes.*

Bafilkán bə́sə bə́bə̄lə́ biníŋgá bə́bɛ̄ átəgə lod. *All Africans have no more than two wifes.*

Nouns Used as Adverbs: Manner:

There is no formal distinction between a noun used in a noun position in a sentence and a noun used in a modifier position, either adjectivally or adverbally.

Ayiɛn kə á sikúlu mban. *He has to go to school regularly.*

/m̀ban/, *industriousness, diligence,* could be used in a noun slot in a sentence, but it could also be used as a modifier of a noun or a verb. In the sentence above, it is used as an adverb of manner and means *with industriousness, with regularity, regularly,* but no preposition occurs before /m̀ban/ in this type of construction.

With some nouns, a preposition occurs to form an adverbial phrase of manner.

M̀bɛ́ wáfɛdəban ee ndzug. *The door opens with difficulty. The door is hard to open.*

Plural nouns can also be used as adverbs of manner. In the sentence below, /minsɔ́ məko(l)/ means *bare feet.*

Awulu minsɔ məko(l). *He is walking barefooted.*

When a sentence is nominalized, nouns used as adverbs of manner are still used to modify a nominalized verb.

Ádudu mə́túa avól wábonde amalá. *Driving a car (too) fast causes accident.*

/avól/, *speed,* modifies the infinitive /ádudu/, *to drive, driving.* Here /avól/ means *with speed,* i.e. *fast,* but the implication is *with too much speed, too fast.*

Emphasis can also be indicated by reduplicating the noun adverb.

Ti myáwul və mbíl mbí(l). *Don't walk so fast.*

Vocative Particle: /aá/: Oh, Hey:

When addressing or calling someone, the vocative particle /aá/ is often used. With many traditional Ewondo names there is no change in the form of the name; but in names in which the stem vowel is repeated, some names lose the final consonant. When addressing God and when using certain titles, there are tone changes.

Aá Ndɔ́ŋge.	*Oh, Ndenge.*	(No change.)
Aá Sɛm.	*Hey, Seme.*	(Final vowel dropped.)
Aá Zamba.	*Oh, God.*	(Final high changes to low.)

Emphatic Particles: /kə́/ and /áá/:

/kɔ́/, *go*, is used as an emphatic particle at the beginning of sentences and means *actually, really, it is a fact that.* /áá/, and sometimes /hḿ/, are used as emphatic particles at the end of a sentence. They add emphasis to the sentence and are often difficult to translate. Sometimes they translate *then, of course, you see, so, thus, but, however, now then.* /kə́/ and /áá/ may occur in the same sentence.

Kə mənə mɔ́ngɔ́ sikúl áá.	*I really am a student, of course.* *Now then, it is a fact that I am a student.*

Responsive Particles: /owóé/, /m̀ḿ/: /təgə/, /ḿ ḿm/:

Affirmative answers to questions are /owóé/ and /m̀ḿ/, *yes.* /owóé/ is more common and clearer. /m̀ḿ/, though it means *yes*, may merely be an acknowledgment that the hearer has heard the speaker. /təgə/ and /ḿ ḿm/, *no*, are negative answers to questions. The emphatic particle /tə́/, *then, of course, sure, gladly,* may be added for emphasis, e.g. /təgə tə́/. /təgə tə́/ can translate into English by putting stress on *NO*. (See the next to last line of Text 6.) In /ḿ ḿm/, there is a glottal stop [ʔ] after the first /ḿ/.

One cannot help but notice the similarity between /m̀ḿ/ and /ḿ ḿm/ and the same sort of particles in English. One can only wonder whether this is chance or borrowing, until more research can be done.

Emphatic *NO* stronger than /tə(gə)/ is expressed by /(kú)koá/, *absolutely not.* The longer form /kúkoá/ is apparently not any stronger than the shorter form /koá/.

Question Markers: Interrogative Particles:

Ewondo has several interrogative pronouns, adverbs, and particles. The particles are formal grammatical marks of question and have no direct, word-for-word translation; but they must be translated with the corresponding English grammatical equipment such as word order reversal in questions.

Yə wadzɔ́ŋ ísīe?	*Are you looking for work?*
Wadzə́ŋ ísí āá?	*Oh, are you looking for work?*

The question particle /(i)yə/ or /(i)ya/ can be put at the beginning of a sentence, and it makes the sentence into a question. This is the usual way of making a question from a statement. The question particle /aá/ can be put at the end of a sentence, and it makes a statement into a question; but it shows surprise or wonderment at something unusual or unexpected.

The interrogative particle /yə/ or /ya/ is a different word from /yá/, *how*, *what*. /yá/ usually occurs at the end of the sentence.

Ŋgɔ́ bázu aŋá, obo yá?	*If they (were to) come today, what would you do?*

The question particle /ŋga/ occurs at either the beginning or end of a sentence and expects a positive answer to the question. It translates as a negative tag question such as *didn't he (?)*, *haven't you (?)*.

Oyə́gədí kpəm ŋga?	*You are eating manioc leaves for the first time, aren't you?*
Ífɛ̄dɔ́ ŋga?	*It is locked, isn't it?*
Ŋga wayɛ́m ɲɛ̄ ŋga?	*You know him, don't you?*

/á dzé/, *why not* is also used as a tag question. It usually occurs at the end of the sentence. (See also the uses of /dzé/, *what*, under interrogative pronouns.

/ámú dzé/ or /ású dze/, *why, because of what, what for,* is used to form questions asking purpose.

Interrogative Locative: /vé/: Where:

The locative interrogative /vé/, *where*, usually occurs at the end of a sentence and marks a question. If there is a temporal conjunction such as /ǹtíé tē/, *when, (at)that time (when)*, the conjunction may follow /vé/.

Tébɔ́le anə vé?	*Where is the table?*

Oákād naa aŋgákə vé?	*Where did you say he went?*
Mveé bidí ídīg á ndóan, otoá vé ntīé tē?	*Where were you when the pot of food was burning on the fire?*

Interrogative Temporal: /ódén/: When:

The temporal interrogative /ódén/, *when*, usually occurs at the end of a sentence and marks a question. In some sentences, /ódén/ means *how long?, since when?*.

Wasɔ́ ódén?	*When did you arrive?*
Watádikoan ódén?	*Since when/how long have you been sick?*

Interrogative Causative: /ámú dzé/: Why:

The interrogative Causative /ámú dzé/, *why*, literally *because (of) what*, occurs at the beginning of a sentence and marks a question.

Ámú dzé ókə?	*Why did you leave?*

PREPOSITIONS

Ewondo, like African languages in general, has only a few prepositions, but a large number of compound prepositions can be formed with nouns. Many of these compound prepositions are also conjunctions. The two basic prepositions are /á/, *in, on, to, at, by*, and /ee/, *with, and, by, to*. See also the discussion of the meaning and use of /á/ under temporal adverbs.

Location: Direction: /á/:

á ndá	*in/into/to/at the house*
á tébɔ́le	*on/onto/to the table*
ádī	*to eat, eating*
ákə	*to go, going*
á tólób	*at twelve/noon/lunchtime*
álū	*at/during the night*
á mɔ́ŋgɔ́	*in/during childhood*
óŋgōla	*in/at/to Yaoundé*

/á/ contracts with the /a /prefix of Class 5 nouns. If the noun is a high-toned stem, the stem tone becomes mid, e.g. /á/ plus /adí/ becomes /ádī/, *to eat*, and /á/ plus /alú/ becomes /álū/, *at/during the night*.

/á/ contracts with /o/ by being elided, but the high tone of /á/ "slips over" onto the /o/, and a high-toned stem becomes mid, retaining the influence of the elided low tone. /á/ plus /oŋgóla/ becomes /óŋgōla/, *in/at/to Yaoundé*.

Akə́ á Duála á mə̄túa.	*He went to Douala by car.*
Móán atoá á tébəle.	*The baby is sitting on the table.*
Á məsus m(ɔ) óloŋ, aŋgákū ásí akol á búgi.	*(While) Coming down the ladder, he fell and broke his leg.*
Á məmaná mɔ́ sikúlu, meedúgan á Kamolún.	*On the completiong of my studies, I will return to Cameroon.*

Verbal nouns are in the plural to indicate duration. This usage of /á/ plus a plural verbal noun may not be reflected in the English translation, but it may be translated *while, during, at, on, after*.

Infinitive: /á/ Plus Class 5 Verbal Nouns

The infinitive is formed with /á/ plus a Class 5 verbal noun, e.g. /adí/, *eating*. Infinitives have both verb-like and noun-like functions. They can take objects, and they can fill a noun slot in a sentence. Infinitives often translate best as gerunds.

Álūg ḿbəmbə miníŋgá ón(ə) ayé.	*It is hard to find a good wife.* *To marry a good woman is hard.*
Ákuus mɔ̄túa ónə día.	*Buying a car is expensive.*
Áfudi fɔ́m á ndá ónə ŋgul isíé.	*Painting a house is hard work.* *(To put paint on a house is strong work.)*
An(ə) iyə́gan ńsóán ádudu mətúa.	*He is too drunk to drive a car.*

In the first three sentences above, the infinitive serves as a noun subject of the sentence. In the last sentence, the infinitive /ádudu/, *drive, pull*, serves as modifier of /ǹsóán/, *drunk(en)*.

/á/ occasionally is used to mark the logical agent of passive constructions.

Moyɔg mə́nɔ ɲnúán á bod.	*The wine is/was drunk by the men.*

(/ee/ is the usual preposition for marking the logical agent of passive constructions.)

Accompaniment: Association: Instrument: /ee/

/ee/, written "ayi" in the traditional orthography, is the general preposition meaning *having something to do with something, having a relationship of some sort with*. In a specific context, /ee/ can mean *and, with, made out of, by means of, done by, to/for/on behalf/benefit of, accompany*. Some verbs require a preposition before an object, and this preposition is nearly always /ee/,

Edea an(ə)ázáŋ Yaúnde ee Duálá.	*Edea is between Yaoundé and Douala.*
Ákɔ̄do ásí ee ndib ónə mbəŋ.	*It is good to get up early.*
Bákadkom ńsɔ̄gɔ́ ee mbaŋ.	*They make bracelets out of ivory.*
Matsíg tsíd ee okəŋ.	*I'm cutting the meat with a knife.*
Bidí byádīban ee tóg.	*The food is eaten with a spoon.*
Mɔnɔ babi ee tébɔ́le.	*I am near the table.*
Wá ónɔ ɲnoán ee dɔ́bádɔ.	*The arm is/was extended/straightened out by the doctor.*

Bɔ́ŋgɔ́ bə sikúlu bə́nə ɲyə́gə́lə́ ee baɲə́gələ.	*Students are taught by teachers.*

/ee/, meaning *and, with,* is the preposition for linking or joining two nouns, as in /okəŋ ee tɔ́ŋ/, *a knife and a spoon.* /ee/ occurs in a few temporal constructions, e.g. /ee ndib/, *with the dawn/daybreak,* but this often means *in the early morning, early, ahead of time.* /ee/ is used to specify the material something is made of, as in /ee mbaŋ/, *made of/from ivory.* /ee/ is also used to indicate *tool* or *instrument,* as in /ee okəŋ/, *with a knife.* /ee/ occurs after a few nouns which indicate location, as in /Mɔnə babi ee tébəlé/, *I am (at) nearness with the table.* /ee/ is the usual preposition for indicating logical agent in a passive construction, e.g. /ee baɲə́gələ/, *by (the) teachers.* See the section on passive verbs for more details.

Kogól ee m(ə) ee ɲé.	*Ask him for me.*
Məɔ́kūán ee ɲé ndzaag.	*I sold him the wood.*
Mayáan ee ɲé ású bīdí	*I am paying him for the food.*
Bákadkuan ee mimbaŋ ee ndamba.	*They sell/trade in ivory and rubber.*
Alóm ma ee ndzaag.	*He sent me with the wood.*
Məsɔ́ ee ndzaag.	*I brought the wood.* *I came with the wood.*
Məsɔ́ ee ɲé ndzaag.	*I brought him the wood.*

Certain verbs require a preposition before an object, and the preposition is nearly always /ee/. There are two types of these verb-preposition constructions. One means *to, for, on behalf of, for the benefit of,* as in /kuan ee/, *sell (to), trade/deal in,* and /kogol(o)/, *ask to/for/of/on behalf of;* and the other means *accompany,* as in /sɔ́ ee/, *come, arrive with,* i.e., *bring,* and /lóm ee/, *send with someone, send someone with.*

See also the discussion on /ee/ under the sections on comparatives, temporal adverbs, and relative clauses.

At Someone's Place: Source: Separation: /ábə/

The basic meaning of /ábə/ is *to/at someone's house/place.* This can be extended to mean *source* or *logical agent.*

Mayɔŋ málɛ́n mɔ́nə ɲɲuán ábɔ̄ bɔ̄tí.	*Palmwine is drunk by the Ewondo people.*
Ŋnag ínə ntɔ́lán ábɔ̄ mɔ̄wúsá.	*Cows are raised/kept by the Hausa.*

The prepositional phrases with /ábə/ could just as well be translated *among* (like French *chez*), since the meaning is *characteristic activity/practice of this group of people*. /ábə̄/ can be reduced to /á/, and the meaning is the same; however, the meaning is clearer with /ábə/.

Makus bɛlɛ́d áb(ə̄) Anton.	*I buy bread at Antoine's.* *I buy bread from Antoine.*
Maɔ́kūs ndzaag ábə ɲé.	*I bought it at his place.* *I bought it from him.*
Mesɔ́ ee ndzaag ábə ɲə́.	*I brought the wood from his house.* *I brought the wood from him.*

These three sentences can mean either *the place or person that is the source*.

Miŋkókōán mínə nsíɛ́n ábə̄ dɔ́bɔ́dɔ.	*Sick people are treated by the doctor.* *Sick people are treated at the doctor's.*

Nekes reports only the meaning *at someone's place* for /ábə/ (p. 189), but it is easy to see from the above examples how the construction has acquired the meanings *from (a source)* and *by (a logical agent)*, since the same sentence(s) would be used in such similar or the same circumstances.

/á bōg/, *when, while, at/during the time (that), whenever*, is a contraction of the prepositions /á/ and /abóg/, *time*. It is used as a temporal preposition and also as a temporal conjunction. See the section on conjunctions for additional sentences with /ábōg/.

Ádzɔ̄g ábōg ŋ́kulu ónə mosis.	*Swimming during a storm is dangerous.*
Zaá mə yɛ́n ábōg ásə.	*Come see me (at) anytime.*

For Use/Purpose of: /ású/ or /ámú/

/ású/ or /ámú/ means *for someone (to use) for some purpose*. (/ású/ seems to be derived from /asú/, *face, forehead*.) /ású/ is also a conjunction meaning *because*. See the entries under conjunctions for other sentences.

Mimkpámáŋ bíyé byáma bínē ású sikúlu.	*My new clothes are for school.*
Aŋgálad mkpámáŋ íyé ású díé.	*He made the new dress for her.*

Comparison:

Ewondo has several ways of expressing comparison. To express *greater than*, the following structures are used.

Ikie ínə adid ídaŋ ŋgoa(g).	*Iron is heavier than stone.*
Ikie yálod ŋgoa(g) ádid.	*Iron is heavier than stone.*
Ee ŋgoa(g) ee ikie, ikie ńdzó yadaŋ.	*Iron is heavier than stone.*

The first sentence above is literally *Iron is weight surpasses stone*. The second is literally *Iron surpasses stone in weight*. The third is literally *With stone with iron, iron it surpasses*. /ndzo/ is an extended independent pronoun. The three sentences above are listed in the order of their frequency of occurrences: the first sentence is the most common. The third sentence is rather emphatic.

Direct comparison can also be made using /lod/.

Iɲiŋ yálod akúmá.	*Life is more than wealth.*
Idíŋ yálod dzóm ísə.	*Love is greater than everything.*

More than can also be expressed in two separate clauses.

Məbələ́ ábu kábad; məwóm (mə)saman aboád.	*I have more than sixty sheep.*

(The above sentence is literally *I have many sheep; sixty is small.*)

To express *the greatest, the most*, /lod/ or some other verb meaning *exceed, surpass*, plus /-sə/, *all*, is used.

An(ə) anɛ́n álod(o) mod ósə.	*He is the biggest of all.*
Nɲ(ə) anə́ ɲníá modo alodo bí bə́sə.	*He is the oldest of us all.*

(The last sentence above literally means *He, he is the adult person surpasses us all.*)

Equality of comparison is expressed by /anə́/, *as*, plus the item being compared, following the main clause.

Ánton awulu mbíl anə́ Yōsɛ́b.	*Antoine runs as fast as Joseph.*
Ɛ́ ŋgob ɲí ínə mbəŋ ikúi anə ákĪá ávə̄g.	*These shoes are as good as the other kind.*

(The last sentence is literally *These shoes are good arrive are other kind.*)

At least is expressed by /təgə/, *without*, plus /daŋ/; and *no more than* is expressed by /təgə/ plus /lod/.

Bɑlfilkɑ́n bə́sə bə́bɔ̄lə́ biníŋgɑ́ bə́bɛ̄ ɑ́təgə daŋ.	*All Africans have at least two wives.*
Bɑlfilkɑ́n bə́sɔ bə́bɔ̄lə́ biníŋgá bə́bɛ̄ ɑ́təgə lod.	*All Africans have no more than two wives.*

Equality of comparison in which the second item is somehow the result or accompaniment of the first is expressed by /anə́....anə́/, *like....like*. See the discussion of descriptive equationals in the section on sentence types.

CONJUNCTIONS

Ewondo has only a few conjunctions, but numerous compound or phrasal conjunctions are derived from prepositional phrases. Deriving conjunctions from prepositional phrases is a very productive part of Ewondo grammar. Only a few of the more common examples are given here, but the learner/reader of Ewondo should be able to understand others either through the literal meaning or by analogy with those given below. For example, it shouldn't be too hard to guess that *to the border of* might mean *until*.

/ǹtíé/, *stretch/span/period of time*, combines with various items to form compound conjunctions and adverbs. A list of some of these is given here, and a few sentences. See the entries under the conjunction /anə́/, *since*, and the interrogative adverb /vé/, *where*, for more sentences.

ǹtíé té	*then, at that time (when)*
ǹtíé anə́	*since*
ǹtíé á vé	*how long? how far?*
ǹtíé mbóág	*equally big/long/wide/high*
Aŋgábə́ á yāma ntíé tē ósə mətoá ábāá.	*She was cooking while I was sitting in the living room.*
Ǹtíé anə́ mə́ŋgábíālí, mətoá óŋgōla.	*Since I was born, I have lived in Yaoundē.*
Oŋgóla anə ntsɛ́ndɛ́n ǹtíé ané míntáŋán míŋgásuan.	*Yaoundē has changed since the Europeans came.*

/ábōg/, a contracted prepositional phrase meaning *when, while, at/during the time (that), whenever*, is used as a conjunction to introduce subordinate clauses. /á/ plus /abóg/, *time*, becomes /ábōg/.

Ábɔ̄g ásə aázu á ndá, biáɲū məyɔg.	*Whenever he comes to my house, we drink wine.*
Ábɔ̄g mvəŋ ib(ɔ́)ínɔ̄ŋɔ, məkáŋgá á ndá.	*While it was raining, I stayed in the house.*
Ábɔ̄g ásə ondúgán ánā, təbəgə.	*Whenever you get back today, stop by.*

/ıyɔŋ/, *time, occasion*, plus the definite article /é/ forms /íyɔŋ/, *when, the time that, whenever*.

Íyɔŋ ísə ŋkód ónə, bidí bíávū ki.	*Whenever it is dry, the crops don't do well.*

Á Kamərún íyɔŋ mvəŋ yanɔŋ, ŋ́kulu avuúŋ fə.	*Whenever it rains in Cameroon, it thunders also.*

/á/, *in, on, at, to, by,* is also used as a conjunction. When used as a conjunction, /á/ introduces a temporal clause; and the other clause often begins with /ńdə/, *then, at that time.*

Á mə̄bə́ mə̄kə̄lə́ á ndá, ńdə məə́ku ásí.	*As I was going home, I fell down.*

/ǹne/, *border, edge; up to, until,* combines with various other words to form a number of temporal and locative adverbials.

anə́	*as; since*	ǹne anə́	*as soon as, since*
ává	*to/at here*	ǹne ává	*up to here, so far*
te	*that*	ǹne te	*then, at that time*
fə	*also*	ǹne áfə anə́	*if however*
ɲɔ́	*this*	ńne ɲɔ́	*now, from now on*

/anə́/ or /ané/, *as, since,* occurs by itself as a conjunction. It also occurs in combination with nouns having a temporal meaning, such as /ǹtíé/, *time(span), period of time.* See also the sentences under /ǹtíé/.

Anə́ mə̄sɔ́ va otoó vé ntíé tē?	*Where have you been since I arrived here?*
Ǹtíé ané mə́ŋgákə á nnam mintáŋán, məŋgə́lə́ tə dí kpəm.	*Since I have come to Europe, I haven't eaten any manioc leaves.*
An(ə́) ók(ə) á mákíd, móán anə və ɲyón.	*Since you went to the market, the child has been crying.*
Anə́ mátádə ɲə́ bánda, təgə sɔ.	*Since I have started inviting him, he hasn't come.*
Awulu mbíl an(ə́) Anton.	*He runs as fast as Antoine.*

/anə́ .... anə́/, *like ...., like, as ...., as, the more ...., the more,* is used to form comparisons, the second of which is somehow the result or accompaniment of the first.

Anə́ məlú, anə́ fəg.	*As the days, so the wisdom. The older we get, the more we understand.*

/ású/ or /ámú/ means *because, for the reason that,* and is used as a conjunction. It is also a preposition meaning *for someone, for some purpose.* See the entries under prepositions for more sentences.

Yám bīdí ású é ósə awóg zie.	*Fix some food because everyone is hungry.*

SENTENCE TYPES

Ewondo is an SVO language, i.e. its basic sentence order is subject, verb, object, but there are several basic sentence patterns from just a verb to a complex of nouns and verbs with their modifiers. There are demonstrative equational sentences, and also vocatives and set formulas.

Set Formulas:

Set formulas are sentences that are invariable, or nearly so, and are used in special settings, e.g. greetings, like:

Ḿbəmbe kídí.	*Good morning.*
Kídí mbəŋ.	*Good morning.*

The first speaker has to use the order given in the first greeting, and the responder the order in the second greeting.

Demonstrative Equationals: N + Pro.

Demonstrative equational sentences are deictics or pointers and are composed of a noun and a pronoun, and sometimes have modifiers such as a relative clause.

Məndzáŋ dí.	*This is a marimba.* *Here is a marimba.*
Mə ɲɔ́.	*Here I am.* *It's me. (It's I.)*
Ɲnə̄ ɲɔ́.	*Here he is.* *It's him. (It's he.)*
Kúlu ɲe asɔ́.	*Kulu is the one who came.*

Intransitives: (N+)V(+Av/Prep+N)

A sentence in Ewondo may consist of only a verb. Since a finite verb has a verb-subject prefix, there may or may not be a noun or an independent pronoun subject. There may also be adverbs or prepositional phrases.

Mənɔ.	*I am (here/there).*
Madí.	*I am eating.*
Tadá akoan.	*My father is sick.*
Ǹdzíbán ón(ə) abé.	*Stealing is a bad thing (to do).*

Akə dí.	*He is going now.*
Móán atoá á tébəle.	*The baby is sitting on the table.*
Sikúlu eeman məlú máɲi aná.	*School will end in six days (from today).*
Díbi án(e) á ndá.	*It's dark in the house.*
Mbɛ́ wābúgi.	*The door is breaking.*
Mvəŋ yatəbə.	*The rain is stopping.*
Məndím mən(ɔ) á kɔb.	*There is water in the bowl.*
Wóski akomban ee fon.	*Whiskey is made from corn.*
Sóád dzə̄é yafɔdəban ósū.	*Your shirt buttons in the front.*

/nə/, *BE*, may be followed by a word of any word class, but it may occur as the complete predicate, or the complete sentence, and means *BE here/there*. /koan/ is a verb which means *BE sick*. (Many English adjectives translate as verbs in Ewondo.) /dí/, *this*, can be used adverbially meaning *this time, now*. /díbi/, *darkness*, is the subject of the sentence /Díbi án(ə) á ndá/, *literally, Darkness is in the house*, or, more idiomatically, *It is dark in the house*.

Descriptives: Subjective Complements: (N+)V+N:

This type of descriptive describes the subject of a sentence by equating a noun with it. Nouns in Ewondo perform many of the grammatical functions that adjectives do in English. (Ewondo has no adjectives, except possibly a handful, depending on the criteria used for defining an adjective. See the section on nouns.) In some cases, the subjective complement translates like a noun; and in some cases, like an adjective. But it must be remembered that this is an artifact of being translated into English, because these are all (N+)V+N structures in Ewondo.

É mod ɲó an(ə) itun.	*This man is short.*
Áfāág ítam ónɔ məsis.	*Digging a well is dangerous.*
Ámáŋ ónə oyab.	*To the sea is a long way.*
Sikúlu anə babi.	*The school is near.*
Məndím mābɔ avəb.	*The water is getting cool.*
Mənɔ mod.	*I am a human being/person.*

Mənə mɔ́ŋgɔ́ sikúlu.	*I am a student.*
Iyé ínə ntu.	*The dress is old.*
Anə nnom.	*He is old.*
Ane mbəŋ.	*She is beautiful.*
Mbɛ́ ónə mbúgɑ́n.	*The door is broken.*
Ánɔ̄ bə́bə́lə́ nɑɑ oŋgásɔ.	*It is true that he came.*
Anə dzó(e) nɑ́ɑ Dzɔ́ɔrd.	*His name is George.*
Ákom ŋ́kɔ̄é ónə ibuúbu.	*It is easy to make a basket.*

This descriptive use of a noun is easily seen in the function of /itun/ above. /itun/ means *piece, part, section;* and when the modifier of another noun, it means *short,* as in the sentence just above. Similarly, /məsis/, *danger* and /oyab/, *distance,* mean *dangerous* and *far* respectively. Likewise, /m̀bəŋ/, *goodness, beauty,* basically mean *BE of high/desirable quality.* In a particular context, /m̀bəŋ/ might translate *good, pretty, nice, appropriate, suitable,* or other terms of approval. Again, these differences in translation are an artifact of the structure of English; in Ewondo a noun like /itun/ has a different set of grammatical occurrences and functions from an English noun and means /itun/. The fact that it translates as both *piece* and *short* is a fact about English, not about Ewondo.

In some sentences, the noun-like quality of modifier or descriptive nouns is more evident, e.g. /mɔ́ŋgɔ́ sikúlu/, *school child.* Also, /ǹnom/, which refers only to people and animals, could just as easily be translated *an old one,* or *an old person.*

/ɔnə dzóe yɑ́/ means *What's your name?* The response is /mənə dzóe nɑ́ɑ ..../, *My name is...,* literally *I am name that (is) ....*

Verbs, including intransitives, may have complex subjects. /ɑ́kom/, *to build, to repair,* is an infinitive with a direct object /ŋ̀kóé/, *basket*; and the infinitive phrase is the subject of /ónə/.

Transitives: Direct Objects: (N+)V+N:

Direct objects follow the verb. Direct objects may be a single noun, a gerund (verbal noun) phrase, or a subordinate clause.

Mɑkom m̀bɛ́.	*I am repairing the door.*
Mɑtsíg tsíd ee okəŋ.	*I am cutting the meat with a knife.*
Mɑkus bɛlɛ́d ɑ́bɔ̄ ɲé.	*I buy bread from him.*
Oókə̄d nɑɑ aŋgɑ́kə vé?	*Where did you say he went?*
Bə́ŋgɑ́yɛ́n ńwū̃wúb ódzíbi mɔní.	*They saw the thief steal the money.*

Mayɛ́n Ῑvóm oŋgáfudi dzɔ.	*I know where you put it.*
Nəə́bə̄ naa ádígi ndzaag.	*I had/made him burn the wood.*
Məŋgádzogə náa iku.	*I dropped it.*
Madiŋ ǹláŋán.	*I like reading/to read.*
Məŋgátələ ɲnúán siga.	*I stopped smoking.*

Transitives: Perceptives: (N+)V+N

To express *perception* or *feeling*, Ewondo uses /wóg/, *hear, feel, perceive*, plus a noun such as /ikódé/, *thirst*.

Mawóg íkōdé.	*I am thirsty.*
Mawóg zie.	*I am hungry.*
Mawóg sɔ́m.	*I am tired.*
Mawóg ndúgúdu.	*I am hot.*
Mawóg ávəb.	*I am cold.*

Thus, it is clear that a noun like /ikódé/ is the direct object of the verb /wóg/, and that /mawóg íkōdé/ literally means *I feel/perceive thirst*. To express intensive perception or feeling, /m̀bə́/, *bad(ness), evil*, precedes the descriptive noun, e.g. /mawóg ḿbə̄ ikódé/, *I am very thirsty*.

Transitives: Indirect and Direct Objects: (N+)N+V+V:

Indirect objects precede direct objects. Noun objects follow the verb or the verb phrase. Pronoun objects follow a single verb, but they precede the main verb (last verb in a verb phrase) if there is a verb phrase. See the section on pronouns.

Mavó ɲə̄ ɲə́.	*I am giving it to him.*
Aásób mə biyé.	*She washed my clothes for me.*
Məə́kə̄d ɲə̄ nlaŋ.	*I told him a story.*
Məə́kə̄d ɲə̄ náa ákus wa bidí.	*I told him to buy you food.*
Z(ə́) áŋgə̄síli wa ívom?	*Who asked you where you found it?*
MəŋgásílῙ ɲé é dzóm áŋgə̄kad ɲè.	*I asked him what he told her.*

Maálōd wá ndá.	*I went/passed by your house.*
Akad mə dzɔ vǝ́.	*He usually gives it to me.*

/aásób mə biyé/ literally means *She washed me the clothes*, but this has to be paraphrased in English to *She washed the/my clothes for me.* Likewise, /maálōd wá ndá/ literally means *I passed you the house*, but must be rephrased in English to *I went/passed by your house.*

In the last sentence in the chart, both pronoun objects precede the main verb /vǝ́/, *give*, and follow the auxiliary verb /kad/, *do usually/regularly.*

Transitives: Direct Objects with Objective Complements: (N+)V+N+N

Objective complements refer to the same person or thing as the direct object and describe or characterize the direct object.

Aŋgáwábɜ̄ ndá fǝ́m.	*He painted the house white.*
Abəlǝ́ mǝ́túa ŋkomán.	*He had his car repaired.*
Áɲū məyɔg wabɔ mod akud.	*Drinking (lots of) wine makes a person crazy.*
Ŋkúkúmá áŋgātəlē ɲé mbəgə ŋkɔ́bɔ.	*The chief appointed him spokesman.*
Súprɛfé aŋgátɛ́lɜ̄ ɲé maán bəzimbi.	*The sous-préfet appointed him a policeman.*
Bálōé ma náa Anton.	*They call me Antoine.*

Serial Verbs: (N+)V(+N)+V((+N)+V):

A series of verbs may be used to describe a series or sequence of action or to show intensive repeated action.

Aŋgádúgan dɔ bɔ.	*He did it again/over.*
Bǝ́nsɔ́ mɜ̄ yɛ́n ókɪ̄dí.	*They are coming to see me tomorrow.*
Abɔ dɔ́ ábɔ bɔ bɔ	*He did it over and over.*
Mədzǝ́ŋə ádzɔŋə dzǝ́ŋə.	*I looked and looked (for it).*
Məsɔ́ á Yaúnde məlod á Édea.	*I came to Yaoundé by way of Edea.*
Makə tsá(b) ndzaag.	*I am going gathering firewood.*

Makə nɔŋ kálada.	*I am on the way to get the book.*
Maáyɛɛ́m ki bom ŋ̀kú.	*I don't know how to play the talking drum.*

/aŋgádúgan dɔ bɔ/, *he returned it do*, analyzes the doing of something over as a series of actions, viz. returning and doing.

The use of serial verbs and auxiliary verbs is one of the most complex and creative parts of Ewondo grammar. Certain verbs such as /dúgan/, /bɔ/, /kə/, and /yɛ́m/ enter into many series of verbs. Since this is such a creative feature of Ewondo grammar, one can only refer to a dictionary to help discover the meaning if the meaning is not transparent. See also the section on auxiliary verbs.

Also, as discussed in the section on auxiliaries, /dzám/, *thing, ability, capability*, forms verb phrases with two or more verbs and means *can, BE able to*.

Mənə dzaám kə.	*I can go.*

Some serial verbs have to be learned as idioms, since it is sometimes difficult to determine the meaning of the phrase from the constituent elements. Some of these are described in the section on verbs. An example would be:

Miníŋgá te adaŋ diŋ ńnōm.	*That woman loves her husband very much.*

/daŋ/, *cross over, pass by, surpass*, serves here to mean *very much*, and is so common in usage that it is probably best to consider it both an independent verb and an auxiliary.

Descriptive Equationals: /anə́/+N+/anə́/+N:

/anə́....anə́/, *like....like, as....as, the more....the more*, is used to form comparisons, the second of which is somehow the result or accompaniment of the first.

Anə́ məlú, anə́ fəg.	*As the day, so the wisdom.* *The older we get, the more we understand.*

Quotatives: Pro+/náa/+Object Clause:

When reporting a direct quote, no verb is used in the main clause, only a pronoun, and sometimes the noun to which the pronoun refers, e.g. /ɲé náa..../, literally *he that....*, but it means *he said that....*

Kúlu ɲé ee Zəə́ naa, "Aá mə̄dzə̄ŋ, y(ə) on(ə) akúd?"	*Turtle said to Leopard, "My brother, are you crazy?"*

Relative Clauses:

Relative clauses modify or describe some noun in a sentence. The verb in a relative clause takes the verb-subject prefix of the class of the noun the verb modifies. Relative clauses are much more common in Ewondo than in English. Many things that would be expressed by present participles and noun clauses in English are expressed by relative, i.e. adjective, clauses in Ewondo. For example, *running water is* /məndím mənlod/, literally *water it is running,* i.e. *water that is running.* Likewise, a noun clause in English like *where you put it* would be a relative clause, as in /məyɛ́n Īvóm oŋgáfudi dzɔ/, *I saw the place where you put it.* /ivóm/, *place,* cannot be omitted in Ewondo as it can be in English.

A noun modified by a relative clause is definite and therefore is preceded by the definite article /é/. In the sentence above, /é/ has contracted with the noun it modifies. /é/ plus /ivóm/ contracts to /ívōm/ if not following a word ending in a high tone. In the sentence above, /é/ plus /ivóm/ contracts to /Īvóm/, since it is following a word ending in a high tone.

Nekes reports a type of relative clause with /yaá/ between the modified noun and the verb of the relative clause (p. 140), but my two main informants reject this as ungrammatical.

The subject of the main clause of a sentence may be either the subject or object of the relative clause modifying it.

É mod oŋgáyáan, adúgánə́ sɔ́.	*The man you paid has come back.*
É miníŋgá áŋgākə eeduganəə́ zu.	*The woman who left will come back.*
Bíi é mɔ́ŋgɔ́ áŋgābə́ ákɔnɔ biká á tsɔ́s.	*The boy who was sick and I went to church.*
É tébə́le aŋgáb(ə́) íbūga aákomban.	*The table that was broken was repaired.*

The direct and indirect objects of the main clause of a sentence may be either the subject or object of the relative clause modifying it.

Maláŋ é kálad anə́ mbəŋ.	*I am reading a good book (a book that is good).*
Maákád ki ɲú mə̄ndím mə́nlod.	*I don't drink any running water.*
Məŋgákəbəbə é mɔ́ŋgɔ́ ákoan.	*I visited the boy who is sick.*
Aŋgákád wa ńlɔmbi ózu ee wá.	*He told you which bottle to bring.*
Maáyɛ́m ki é mod aábɔ.	*I don't know who did it.*

Mayɛ́n ŋ́kōá óbóo á ŋkɔ ásí.	*I saw an antelope (that was) lying next to a log.*
Məŋgáyáan éé mod aŋgádúgan zu.	*I paid the man who came back.*
Aŋgákad ɲé ivóm aŋgálíg kálada.	*He told her where he left the book.*

In /aŋgákad wa ńlɔmbi ózu ee wá/, *He told you which bottle to bring,* the relative clause modifies /n̂lɔmbi/, *bottle,* and the sentence literally means *He told you the bottle it come with you.*

In the first sentence below, /é mod ósə/, *whoever,* is both the indirect object of the main verb and the subject of the relative clause. Likewise, in the second sentence below, /é dzóm ísə/, *whatever,* is the direct object of the main verb and also the subject of the relative clause.

Vá é mód ósə aázu məkabə.	*Give the macabo to whoever comes.*
Vá ɲē é dzóm ísə aáyi.	*Give him whatever he wants.*
Álúgú é mīníŋgá ósə aádiŋ.	*Let him marry whichever woman he loves.*

Relative clauses can also modify the object of a preposition. In the sentence below, /é fə́m yáfum/, *the color that is white,* is the object of the preposition /ee/.

Ndá inə ee é fə́m yáfum.	*The house is painted white.* *The house has white paint.*

/nə ee/ is one of the ways of expressing *have* in Ewondo, but only in a descriptive sense and not in a possessive sense. /mənə ee miníŋá/ does not mean *I have a wife/woman(.)*, but it means *I am with a woman(.), I am accompanying a woman.*

Relative clauses can also occur in both clauses of a demonstrative equational sentence. This is a fairly common type of imperative used to specify the person to/for whom something is to be done.

É ɲɔ́ ǎdzíb, é ɲ(e) oyídəg.	*Beat the one who stole.* *The one who stole, the one you beat.*

One type of relative clause may be difficult for the speaker of English to recognize, since it does not usually translate as a relative clause. The relative clause of the first sentence below would be more obvious if the sentence were translated *I saw him who went outside;* however, this does not convey this meaning of the sentence.

Mayɛ́n ɲe akui á nsəŋ.	*I saw him go outside.*
Mayɛ́n wa ová ɲě dzɔ.	*I saw you give it to him.*

Relative clauses that modify a noun used as a modifier are introduced by /náa/, *that*.

Ánə̄ bə́bə́lə́ naa aŋgásɔ.	*It is true that he came.*

Purpose Clauses: In Order To: /náa/:

To express *the purpose for doing something*, a subordinate clause introduced by /náa/, *that*, is used. This is apparently the same /náa/ that introduces quotative clauses. It also has the shapes /nəə/, /na/, and /nə/, depending on the other tones and vowels in the sentence.

Aŋgátíe na akə loo bod.	*He went to call the people.*
Məndemká(g) ízīmbí dzam nə́ə mak(ə) á Paris.	*I have just packed my suitcase to go to Paris.*
Madub biyé nə́ bitəg.	*I am putting the clothes in to soak*
Bod bə́sɔ́ vá náa bázu wɔ yɛ́n.	*Some men came to see you.*
Avə́ mə̄ máan nə́ mə́və wa.	*He gave me a present to give to you.*
Anə ńnom náa akə á bəzimbi.	*He is old enough to go into the army.*
Bintóyá man áyóŋ ádīban.	*It (the food) is hot enough to (be) eat(en).*
Abələ́ mān mɔ̄ní náa akus mətúa.	*He has enough money to buy a car.*
Aŋgə́lə́ akoanɔ iyə́gan náa akə á dulu.	*She is still too sick to go on a trip.*

Causative Clauses: Cause/Make Do: /náa/:

To express *to cause/get/make/force/have someone do something*, /bɔ/, *do, make,* plus /náa/ plus a subordinate Clause is used.

Məə́bɔ̄ naa ádigi ndzaag	*I made him burn the wood.*
Məə́bɔ̄ naa ndzaag ídígəban.	*I got the wood burnt.*

Coordination:

It was shown in the section on prepositions that /ee/, *and, with,* is often used to join nouns, but it is never used to join clauses. In fact, coordination between nouns often occurs by juxtaposition and without /ee/.

Məŋgáyɛ́n bəwaa bə́bɛ̄ zəə́ dzīá.	*I saw two chimpanzees and a leopard.*
Ǹna aŋgábíé bəŋgoan bə́lɛ́ fám íɲi.	*My mother bore three girls and four boys*

In the section on inclusion and exclusion in pronouns, there is a detailed discussion of coordination with and without /ee/. The same type of system occurs with nouns, but it doesn't occur joining clauses.

Bəvə́ bí ŋgá wam və ílá.	*They gave me and my wife only three.*

Coordination between clauses is often by juxtaposition.

Makad yeé kə á máŋ məzaá fə mvɔɛ́.	*I often go to the coast and come back healthy.*
Kələ́ fádə́ lɔmbɔ óyam.	*Pick some macabo leaves and cook (them).*
Bəŋgə́nə mimbegə miíkə.	*Take the luggage and go.*
Ǹló dzóbo atə́bə̄ á ŋkiɛ adzáŋ á koe.	*The sun rises in the east and sets in the west.*

Disjunction: /dá/ : /ńdə/ : /və/:

Disjunction between two clauses is marked by /dá/, *but,* (literally *one*, Class 3) and/or /və/, *only. moreover, but.* /ńdə/ is an emphatic form of /dá/.

Madiŋ ǹnam wamɔ, dá maádiíŋ ki bəzimbi	*I love my country, but I don't like military service.*
Məkə́ ífatsila, dá ɲné álīgí á ndá.	*I went to the store, but she stayed home.*
Abui lábə́lə́ ki məŋgál, dá bə́nə dzaám lām tsíd	*Most of them don't have guns, but they can use traps.*
Məə́kūs ŋ́kus, və dá mədzɛ́ wɔ́.	*I bought a pen, but I lost it.*
Maáyií ki fə ŋkus, və itiləga.	*I don't need a pen, only a pencil.*
Məkə́ ífatsila ńdə mədúgánə́ fə.	*I went to the store, but I'm back.*

If-Clauses: Real Conditions:

Real conditions are expressed with /ŋgə́/, *if*, plus the hodiernate past in the condition clause and the definite future in the result clause; but there may be a stative verb in either or both clauses. Real conditions are general facts about reality, facts or "truths" about the social order, and judgments (including promises) that are presented as certain.

Ng(ə́) ófūdi ŋku ɑ́ mə́ndím, wɑ́yiɲuŋəlɑn.	*If you put salt in water, it will dissolve.*
Ng(ə́) ówɔ̄(é) mod, wɑyikə ɑ́ mbog.	*If you kill someone, you will go to jail.*
Ng(ə́) ɑ́sɔ̄, ɑyidiŋ ɑ́bɔ̄g.	*If he comes, he will enjoy the show.*
Ng(ə́) ósɔ̄ ɔ̄kídí, meeyɑ́ɑn ee wɑ.	*If you come tomorrow, I will pay you.*
Ngə́ wɑkoɑn, ok(ɔ) ɑ́ də́bə́də.	*If you are sick, you go to the doctor.*
Ng(ə́) óbələ́ mbəmb(ə) isíé, onə dzɑɑ́m kus mə́túɑ ŋgə́ ki ndɑ́.	*If you have a good job, you can buy a car or a house.*
Ngə́ bétəgə síé, bə́təgə dí.	*If they don't work, they won't eat.*

Note the mid tone on the first stem vowel of the action verbs. This is easily explainable for high-toned stems like /sɔ́/, *come*, since /ŋgə́ osɔ́/ would regularly contract to /ŋg ósɔ̄/. When the high tone of /ŋgə́/ "slips over" onto the low-toned /o/ of /osɔ́/, its low tone just doesn't disappear; but its presence is maintained in the "lowering" of the /ɔ́/ of /sɔ́/ to /sɔ̄/. The /ɔ́/ of course isn't lowered, since it is already downstepped because of the terraced-tone intonation. (See the discussion of terraced tones in the phonology section.)

However, the writer has no explanation for the mid tone on low-toned stems like /fudi/, *put in(to)*. Several low-toned stems in this position were elicited, and they all had mid tone.

If-Clauses: Unreal Conditions: Contrary-to-Fact Conditions:

Unreal or contrary-to-fact conditions are marked by /ŋgə́/ in both clauses, i.e. /ŋgə́ .... ŋgə́/, *if .... then*. Unreal or contrary-to-fact conditions are factually untrue or potentially true though presently untrue. If the condition is present and factually untrue, the condition clause is in the present or a locative stative, and the result clause is a future. If the subject of the condition clause has no control over the condition, the condition clause is a locative stative and the result clause is in the definite future. If the subject of the condition clause has (at least some) control over the condition, the condition is in the present and the result clause is in the probable future; however, using the present in the condition clause implies that the condition may not be true in the not-too-distant future.

Ngə́ mətoɑ́ miníŋgɑ́, ngə́ meebəgə íyɔ̄ mīníŋgɑ́.	*If I were a woman, I would wear a woman's clothes.*
Ngə́ mətoɑ́ óŋgōla, ŋgə́ meeɲú məyɔg mɑ́lɛ́n.	*If I were in Yaoundé, I would drink some palmwine.*
Ngə́ mɑkə oŋgolɑ, ŋgə́ məɲyɛ́n ísɔ̄a.	*If I were going to Yaoundé, I would probably see your father.*

In the first sentence above, the speaker clearly had no control over the sex he was born with; therefore, the condition clause is in the stative and the result clause in the future. In the second sentence, the speaker is not in Yaoundé and has no prospect of being in Yaoundé for quite some time; therefore, the condition clause is in the stative and the result clause in the future to indicate the distant reality or remoteness of the possibility of being in Yaoundé and drinking cool, refreshing palmwine there. In the third sentence, the speaker is not now going to Yaoundé, but nothing is said about going or not going later; therefore, the present is used in the condition clause and the probable future in the result clause. (If there were not a second /ŋgə́/ in the result clause, this sentence would be a real condition and the meaning *If I go to Yaoundé, I will probably see your father.*)

If the condition is past and factually untrue (contrary to fact), the condition clause is in the jussive and the result clause is in the hodiernate past or the remote past. If the subject of the condition clause had no control over the condition, the result clause is in the hodiernate past. If the subject had (at least some) control over the condition, the result clause is in the remote past.

Ngə́ mə́bíɑ́li miníŋgɑ́, ŋgə́ məbəgə́ kɑbɑ.	*If I had been born a woman, I would wear a dress.*
Ngə́ mə́yə́gə, ŋgə́ mə̄ŋgɑ́kiɛba aŋkad.	*If I had studied, I would have passed the exam.*

Ng(ə́) ózu aŋgogé, ŋg(á) oŋgábɪ mɔní.	*If you had come yesterday, you would have received the money.*

In the first sentence above, the speaker had no control over being born a man; therefore, the condition clause is in the jussive and the result clause is in the hodiernate past. In the second and third sentences, the condition clause is in the jussive and the result clause is in the remote past; therefore, the subject of the condition clause had at least some control over whether he studied or came for his money.

Text 1

Məma: Aá Kāti.

Káti: Məmá.

Məma: Y'onə vé? (Yə onə → Y'onə)

Káti: Mənə íwābɔ. (á iwábɔ → íwābɔ)

Məma: Bw ávō, óka mə kus dzom á mákíd. (bɔ ávō → bw ávō)

Káti: Məmá, lóm tə́ mod mfə́. Makoan áko(l).

Məma: Dzé ébɔ̄ áko(l)? (á akol → ákol)

Káti: Okəŋ óŋgatsíg mā.

Məma: Y'oŋgábə́ və́? (Yə oŋgábə́ → Y'oŋgábə́)

Káti: Ṓŋgōla. Ā́ bə́mvóé dzámá óŋgōla. (á oŋgóla → óŋgōla)

Məma: N̂dō dzə́ wáyaŋga kə́yɛ̄n dɔ́bɔ́dɔ e dzɔ́?

Káti: Meekə ɲiín māman wábɔ.

Məma: María, nɔŋ ḿfə́g mákíd óka mə kus ítus íyé.

María: Məmá, ma mayií fə.

Text 1T

Mother: Oh, Cathy.

Cathy: Yes, Mother.

Mother: Where are you?

Cathy: I'm in the bathroom.

Mother: Hurry up, and go get me some things at the market.

Cathy: Mother, please send someone else. My toe is hurt.

Mother: What happened to your foot?

Cathy: I hurt myself with a knife.

Mother: Where were you?

Cathy: In town. At one of my friends' house in town.

Mother: Why are you waiting to go to the doctor's with it?

Cathy: I'll go when I've finished taking my bath.

Mother: Marie, take the market basket and go buy me a pagne.

Marie: I want one for me too.

Text 2

A: M̂bɔmbə kídí.

B: Kídí mbəŋ.

A: Y'onə mvɔɛ́? Yə miníŋgá anə mvɔɛ́ e bɔ́án?

B: Owɔ́é, bə́nə mvɔɛ́. Ma mənəə́ fə mvɔɛ́.

A: Ê kádə ɲí yakə vé?

B: Ôbāla. Êyə waákə̄ vé?

A: Â Ŋ̂kōmətu. Ŋgə́ mə̄nɔŋ ɪ́ɲó, yə məkú tə̄?

B: Weekúí, dá á mvús ámú wéetsɛ́nde bəkáad biyɔŋbiyɔŋ.

A: Yə kádə fə yakə á Ŋkómətu tə́tə̄lə́?

B: Ŋgə́ wayi é ɲɔ́lə te, weeyaŋga kɔ́ám.

A: Dzaám boó məwol mám wátsog.

B: Maáyɛɛ́m kig ámú mbɔg ándɛməkə.

A: Kaád ma y'anə tə́ ḿfūbán á nnə̄m étə̄.

B: Ɲná anə tə́ nālá.

A: Bəbə́gə́! Səə́ ɲə̄ ɲɔ́lí ā?

B: Onə mvúmvɔ́m ɔ́nā. Ímɛ̄n ɲɔ̄lɔ́!

Text 2T

A: Good morning.

B: Good morning.

A: How are you? Are your wife and children well?

B: Yes, they are fine. Me, I also fine.

A: Where is this bus going?

B: To Obala. Where are you going?

A: To Nkometu. If I take it, won't I get there?

B: You'll get there, but not fast because you'll have to change buses several times.

A: Is there another bus that goes straight to Nkometu?

B: If you want that one, you'll wait quite awhile.

A: How long do you think?

B: I don't know because one just left.

A: Tell me, is it clean inside?

B: It's not too bad.

A: Look! Isn't that it over there?

B: You're very lucky today. That's it!

Text 3
Ŋ́kúkúmá

Ŋ́kúkúmá ɲ(ə) atə́lə́ bod bə́sə̄ ósú. Ɛ́ɲ(ə) adzóe dzal ásə, tə dzaál te án(ə) anɛ́n yá. Ŋ́kúkúma abələ́ mbama biníŋgá. Dzaám bɔ t(ə) awúɔm ŋgə́ ki məwúɔm (mə́)bɛ̄. Ɛ̄ bīníŋgá bā bə́tóá fufulu an(ə) á sígsa. An(ə́) ɲ́nɔ́lɔ̄ abələ́ ámōs áyām ású ŋkúkúmá. Abələ́ fə ámōs ákə bómbo abə ŋkúkúmá. Ŋ́kúkúmá (é)ɲə anə́ ndzóás mədzó. Ŋ́kúkúmá ɲə anə́ ŋkab məsí. Ŋ́kúkúmá ɲə atɔ́b é bod alóm á bīta. Ɔ́kōbá ŋkúkúmá ɲə aákuan ee bod á mīntáŋán. Mintáŋán míáa míháá ɲē ce ŋku ee biyé ee akúmá fɔ̄ɔ́. Dá məlú mā ŋkúkúmá aábələ́ ki fə akiaá ŋguúl te ŋkuaán bəlɔ óman ya. Ɔ́kōbá, ŋ̀kúkúma áwulugəé ki e məko. Bəlɔ boé bəŋgábəkadgə ɲə bəgə áyób. Á bōg ŋ̀kúkúmá áwáa, ŋgúmə̄ dzal ósə ńdɔ átigədan bə́zəbə ŋkúkúmá. Ee biníŋgá bəbɛ, mbɔ́(g) á mbō nnóm, ɲ́no mbō(g) á mbō ŋgā, é bīníŋgá bəbɛ̄ ba bávə. Awú ŋkúkúmá lákudəban ŋ̀kú(I) náá ǹnam ósə óyɛm náá ŋ̀gul másə

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anə nwúan. Ńnam ósə ósuan á dzál ǹkúkúmá áwū né wázu yáaŋ ee ɲé. Ńdɔ́ŋ awú éndzɔ iíkad bod ídzóm ŋkūkúmá áwú ee dzɔ́. Ńdɔ́ŋ awú iíkadgə́ fə iɲiŋ ŋ̀kúkúmá. Ámvús ǹdɔ́ŋ awú isoa áwú yákad é mod aáyilígi ee akúmá. Isoa(g) áwú yákūli fə é dzóm ísə ŋkúkúmá āyáa nə́ bəbɔ ábog ayiwú, ivóm bāyí ɲe dzəb ee biyé bayí ɲe bóádi. Á nsə̀ŋ áwú ŋkúkúmá isáni yádzə̄mban Ndá bod ŋ̀kúkúmá itələ ósu nsámbá.Bó bəsə bəbə̄lə́ kíɛ́ bílé á mbō nnōm. Ńlíg(i) ilíg é ɲə atələ á mətādí mə́ nsámbá. Á bádzəm ísānī há izímbí mbim ídzōgo á mfə̄ŋ.

Text 3T

The Chief

The chief is the most important person in a village. He governs the whole village, no matter how big it is. He has many wives. This varies from ten to twenty. These wives live together in the same big house. Each of them has her day to cook for the chief and her day to sleep at the chief's place. The chief is the arbiter of quarrels. The chief is the one who distributes land. The chief chooses the people to send to war. In former times, a chief sold people to Europeans. The Europeans gave him salt, clothes, and other things (real wealth). But these days the chief doesn't have that kind of power since selling of slaves is over. Long ago, a chief didn't walk on his feet. His slaves carried him. When a chief died, the whole village was occupied with burying the chief. The chief was accompanied by two women, one on the right side and one on the left; these women were alive. When the chief died, the drum was beaten so that all the countryside might know that the chief was dead. The whole village used to be present at the funeral to say goodby to him. The story of his death told people what he died from. The story of his death also told the life of the chief. After the story of his death, the funeral committee says who the heir will be. The committee also reveals everything the chief wanted when he died, the place they will bury him, and the clothes they will put on him. At the funeral of the chief a traditional dance is performed. The family of the chief stands in the front row. Each one holds tree leaves in the right hand. The heir stands at the beginning of the row. While they dance the traditional dance, the coffin is placed nearby.

Text 4

Abíálí Mɔ́ŋgɔ́

Abíálí mɔ́ŋgɔ́ án(ə) iyə́gan m̀bəmbə dzam. Abíálí mān fám é ndō lādaŋ lugu ású fám é ndz inə́ nnóan(i) ilíg. Abíálí mān mīníŋgá ládzə́mbaán fə dzam də́dā, hə dá tə vəgan ee é dí mān fám. Ḿból mīníŋgá ákə̄ álūg dzóm tē índzɔ abíálí díé lávəganə kí ee ídí mān fám. Áfíáŋə́ boó nálá abíálí ásə ánə hə dzaám mintag. Íyɔŋ mɔ́ŋgɔ́ ābíálí bəbɔndə bóé bávə̄ ɲē dzóé bəti ábiālí. Dzóé minson átsū hálā ámvús ábōg ákə duban á minson. Bot bə́ miníŋgá ee é bá bə́ fám bázu á íbīálí móán ee bifáɛ məkiá məkiá. Abóg ndō látádī hálà biníŋgá bə̄vɔ́g bə́zə́mə bikudəsí. Ibə bəvɔg bə́təgə á ŋkug.

Ámvús a bə́g ndí bod miníŋgá ee é ɲí fām yáhaa móán mətɛ́ ítám fɔ̄ ɲē mvɔm ísə ya iɲiŋə́ mod. Náa, a myóg tadá (é)y(ə) abíálí móán ládzə́mban ee mintag ná. Á nnam Éwondo, móán ánə iyə́gan ḿbəmbə dzam ámú ayɔŋ Éwondo ánə́ h(ə) ábīálí ámú ayɔŋ Éwondo ánə áyɔŋ láyī náá átə́bə məyɔŋ mə́sə ɓsū.

Text 4T

Birth of a Child

The birth of a child is an unusually big event. The birth of a boy is the most celebrated because a man is the heir of the family. The birth of a girl is also celebrated similarly, but not as much as that of a boy. Because a girl will leave her family to get married, her birth is not comparable to that of a boy. Nevertheless, every birth is a happy occasion. When a child is born, his parents give him a family name. The Christian name is given later when he is baptized into the church.

The family of the woman and the family of the man both come at the birth of a child with many kinds of gifts. Then the dancing starts in which some women dance the Heir's Dance. Some others dance shaking their breasts. After the party, the family of the wife and that of the husband bless the child in the traditional manner and wish him happiness all his life. So, countrymen, this is the way the birth of a child is joyfully celebrated. In Ewondoland the birth of a child is an extremely auspicious occasion because (it shows that) the Ewondo tribe is growing because the Ewondo tribe wants to be the most important of all the tribes.

Text 5

A: Yə Kamərún án(ə) ee ndugudu abui?

B: Kamərún ánə ndugudu da tə kúí anə́ lág tsád.

A: Yə mvəŋ yakadnɔ́ŋ á Kamerún ábui?

B: Owoé, dá hə aboóg mvəŋ.

A: Ábōg áfē mvəŋ yaákadnɔ́ŋ áwōé?

B: Mvəŋ yanɔŋ atadgi á ŋgoan samena akələ kúí á ŋgoan á wuómo ee bɛ́ɛ.

A: Yə ŋ́kulu anə wóé abui?

B: Owoé, ńdā fə anə́ məsis.

A: Īy(ə) onə́ dzaám yɛ́m yá nnə̀ mvəŋ yeenɔŋ.

B: Ísí ki ayé. Yób lávīn, dzal áŋgaku ádíbi. Bod ee mvú ee bisíŋga ee kúb ee kábad báŋgakə á ndá.

Text 5T

A: Is Cameroon very hot?

B: Cameroon is hot, but not like the Republic of Chad.

A: Does it rain much in Cameroon?

B: Yes, but only in the rainy season.

A: When is the rainy season there?

B: The rain falls from June through December.

A: Is there much thunder?

B: Yes, it is also dangerous as well.

A: How do you know when it is going to rain?

B: It's not difficult. The sky becomes black, and the village becomes dark. Dogs, cats, chickens, and goats go inside.

atádgi	beginning
wóé	there
íyə	(same as yə)

Text 6

A: Aá, sofɛ́ɛd. Tálágə mətúa álí.

B: Dzé fə maə́bɔ, aá mān bəzimbi? Yə məwóé mod?

A: Dzé yə otəgəyɛ́n ḿfie wávie?

B: Madzaaɛ bidzugá. Mandzí ki mó yɛ̄n ḿbəŋ.

A: Wandzí ki mó yɛ̄n mbəŋ ŋgaa? Pɛlmí?

B: Maábālə́ kī ámú məndəmətádī ndubán mə́tua.

A: Yə tə kálada nnam waábālə́ ki?

B: É ndzō ɲí, dá məŋgə́lə tə yaán tóya.

A: Toóŋ mā á komisáa(d).

B: Tegə tə́ a sə́f. Mətúa así ki é ŋgɔmɔ.

A: M̀bəŋ, wayiyáan mɔ́ní.

Text 6T

A: Hey, driver. Stop your car over there.

B: What did I do soldier? Did I kill somebody?

A: Didn't you see the red light?

B: I'm sorry. I didn't see them well.

A: You didn't see them very well, did you? Driver's license?

B: I don't have one because I've just started driving a car.

A: Don't you have your national identity card either?

B: Here it is, but I haven't paid (this year's) tax yet.

A: Follow me to the police station.

B: No, officer. The car is not mine.

A: Well, you will pay a fine.

ḿfie	light, lamp
mɔ́	them
bidzuga	pardon, generosity
pɛlmí	driver's license (Fr. permis)
dudu	drive, pull
toŋ	follow
komisáad	police station (Fr. commissariat)
səf	officer (Fr. chef)

Text 7

A: Íyə̄ bɔ́ŋgɔ́ bə́kə̄ vé?

B: Ɓə́kə á sikúlu nə́ bákə lɛ́ɛ́ ndamba.

A: Mayi náa biídI ámú máyikə vóm.

B: Ávé?

A: Mayi náa makə á tsɔs álūg Míkɛɛ́l.

B: Y(ə) alúg ánā?

A: Owoe, kə́ ámōs dī́ bɛ̄n.

B: Ngə́ bɔ́ŋgɔ́ bə́tṓ(á) há ŋgə́ bī́ákə.

A: Ámvús tsōás weekə́dzə̄m vé?

B: Mavəg náa á ndá Mikáɛ́ɛl.

A: Te wazu ee zaŋ.

Text 7T

A: Where have the children gone?

B: They have gone to school to play soccer.

A: I want to eat because I'm going somewhere.

B: Where?

A: I want to go to church for Michael's wedding.

B: Is he getting married today?

A: Yes indeed, this very afternoon.

B: If the children were here, then we could go together.

A: After the church, where are you to go dancing?

B: I believe at Michael's house.

A: Don't come back too late.

láa, lɛ́ɛ	play
n̆damba	ball
kə́	indeed, in fact

Text 8

Kúmba

Bətí bábōg kúmba ee bilé. Sií ki bilé bísə ḿbĪá bə́nə́ dzaám bōg. Ilé yáyian tɔbɔ álɛd. Ilé yátsĪgəban bitun aboóg te yáyínəban á mə̄ndím tə ŋgúmā sɔ́ndɔ. Yábōgəban íbūmán fə á ndúan akələ kúí anə́ yábi mbəmbə abím. YásĪləban e akólé akələ kúí anə́ yafub. Àmvús hālá íyánəbán á vĪán akələ kúí anə́ yákód. Yásobəban aboóg tē ínə́ dzaám bələban.

Text 8T

Kumba, A Traditional Wooden Pot

The Ewondo make a kumba out of wood. Not just any tree can be used. The wood must be hard. The wood is cut into pieces and soaked in water for a week. It is scraped out and baked in the fire until it gets the desired form. It is polished with akole leaves until it is cleaned. Then it is set in the sun until it dries out. It is washed and then it is ready to be used.

kúmba	*wooden pot*
bóg	*cut/carve/scrape out*
alɛ́d	*hard, strong*
yín	*soak, dunk*
akələ	*going to; until*
síl	*polish, smooth*
akólé	*akole tree/leaves; traditional sandpaper*
yáni	*hand up/lay/set out to dry*
ndúan	*fire*
kód	*dry (out/up)*

DICTIONARY

The dictionary is organized on the following principles:

1. The order of alphabetization of letters is: /ɑ, b, d, dz, e, ɛ, ə, f, ɡ, gb, [h], i, k, kp, l, m, n, ŋ, ɲ, o, ɔ, s, t, ts, u, v, w, y, z/. There are no entries with initial /ɛ-, ə-, ɔ-, u-, ɡ-, or gb-/; but within words, the order given within the list is followed. A few words are listed with [h] since they are commonly known by this spelling. If a word contains an [h], it is in most cases listed under /v/. See the discussion in the phonology section for the reasons for this.

2. Syllabic nasals are alphabetized ahead of non-syllabic nasals, e.g. /ŋ̀gɑ́(l)/, *wife*, precedes /ŋgɑ́(l)/, *gun*.

3. Words that have final sounds that often or usually drop are written with the portion that drops in parentheses, and such words are alphabetized in the full forms. To find /ŋ̀gɑ́/, *wife*, one would have to look under /ŋ̀gɑ́(l)/; and to find /ki/, *not*, one would have to look under /ki(g) /. Since this is a problem only for final /-l/ and /-g/, it should not pose a serious problem.

4. High tone precedes low tone, e.g. /kóé/, *monkey*, precedes /kóe/, *cough*, which precedes /koe/, *set on fire*.

5. It is impossible to include many dialect variants. This is a problem mainly with certain vowel clusters. The following should solve most of the problems.

a. If an item with /ɔ/ cannot be found under /ɔ/, look under /oɑ/, e.g. /dóɑ́b/ or /dɔb/, *navel*.

b. If an item with /o/ cannot be found under /o/, look under /uo/, e.g. /óndúndúo/ or /óndúndó/, *needle*.

c. If an item with /e, ɛ, or ə/ cannot be found under the letter it occurs with, look under the other two letters.

d. If an item with /w/ plus a vowel cannot be found, look under /u/ plus the vowel, e.g. /twé/, *chest*, is under /túé/.

e. If an item with /y/ plus a vowel cannot be found, look under /i/ plus the vowel, e.g. /tyé/, *pull out*, is under /tíé/

6. If a word with an initial high tone cannot be found, look for the word with an initial low tone. The high tone may be the definite article.

7. There are other tone changes too numerous to list here. Consult the grammar.

8. If a word cannot be found, it may be that it has one or more grammatical prefixes. Remove the prefixes and look for the word without them.

9. If a word has a sequence of two identical vowels, as required in certain positions because of the grammar, the word will be listed with only one vowel in the dictionary, e.g. /ɑkoó(1)/, *foot*, will be listed as /ɑkó(1)/.

- A -

á	in, on, at, by, to ; emphatic particle
a	(question particle)
aá	oh (vocative particle)
aá	yes (response when called)
aá	question particle at the end of sentence
abáá	living room, parlor; man's house
abáá(gá)	headpad
abám	plank, board
abas	fishtail
abé	evil, bad
abɛ́	thigh
abɛ́	kidney of an animal
abɛ́	goat meat given as part of brideprice (rarely another kind of meat)
ábə	at/to someone's residence/place
abə(1)	kolanut, kolatree
abəŋ	farm, field, land
abəŋgé	hand-held bell
abí	manure, dung
abia	a form of gambling in which a number of chips are thrown; the chip(s) used in this type of gambling
abíálí	birth
abím	extent, large ; form, shape
abin	testicle
abóád	thin, skinny

aboam	nasal mucus (from one nostril)
məboam	nasal mucus (from both nostrils)
áboas	(noise of) footsteps or a stick hitting the ground
abob	spider
abóda	a piece of land
abóg	time; (see below)
ábōg	when, while, during the time that
áboóg ásə	each/every time, any time
abóg	feast, festival, holiday; party, dancing, show, entertainment; anniversary
abóm	full
abɔd	thin, skinny, small, little
abɔ́m	elopement
abɔ́ŋ	knee
abɔɔ́ŋ	source of a river
abu	(See abui.)
abúg	corner
abui, abu	much, many
abum	belly, abdomen; pregnant; seat of mind, heart, feelings, emotions
abuúm moa	one's private affairs/secrets
abúm atút	be intelligent/smart
ádI	on the fire
adí	bait (for fishhook or trap)
adíd	weight, heavy
adzó	talk, conversation, discussion case, litigation, quarrel, dispute
afab	wing

afan	forest
afaŋ	magnaminity
afə́b	sheet of paper
áfíáŋə́	in any case
áfíáŋə́ boó nala	nevertheless
afída	lead (metal)
afig	sandflea
afúb	field, farm
afum	white, light gray
ahɔ́d	hunting net
ai, ee	with, and
ai	(See ayi.)
áka	bah! (Shows disbelief or indicates it is not worth the trouble.)
	hey! (Said when someone says something funny.)
akab	generosity, sharing, dividing
akan	buttock(s)
akə	departure
akə́ŋ	ability, intelligence; intelligent, smart
akəŋ	pagan religious rites
akí	egg
akiá(ɛ)	kind, sort
məkiá məkiá	many kinds
akóág	large, flat grindstone; blackboard
akóág	track, footprint
akoan	sickness, disease
ákoankoan	very smooth

ákoe	up, above
akoé	highland region/area
ákōé	upstream
akoe	avarice, greed; greedy
ako(1)	foot, leg; sole of foot; toe
akúd	insanity; nonsense, insane, crazy
akúda	thousand
akúmá	wealth, possessions
akun	ashes used for fertilizer
akuŋ	owl
alámba, lámba	lamp
alɛ́n	palmtree
álí	there
alɔ́	ear
alú	night, night time; day in sense of 24 hours
alúg	marriage
alúsə	late at night (11-2)
amaná	end
ámáŋ	on the coast, at/by the sea
amaŋ	cheek, temple
ámɪ̄ə́ŋ	still, quiet
amos	day
ámōs dɪ̄(ná)	today
amɔ́ŋgɔ́	childhood
ámú	because, since
ámū	here
ámús	back, behind, late

amvóé	friendship
ámvús	back, behind; later after(wards)
aná	today
andíé	post, stake, picket
ándim	completely still/quiet
andɔ́g	mango tree
anɛ́n	big, fat
anə́	like, as, so; each, every
aŋgə́də́	kidney
aŋgə́də́g	hip haunch
aŋgogé	yesterday
áŋkie	down, below
aŋkīé	downstream
aɲóan	onion
aɲu	mouth
asén	smoothness, smooth, slipperiness, slippery
asə́ŋ	mangrove tree
ásí	down, below, on the ground
asimbá	wonder, miracle
asoé	secret, concealed, hidden
asoŋ	incissor
asɔ	sandflea
asú	face
ású (á + asú → ású)	on someone's behalf, for
aɔub	wood ashes
asúg	stupidity, awkwardness, stupid, awkward

atáag	hail
atəg	laziness, lazy
atán	outside
atí	nobility, purity; noble, pure
atóe	a drop
atólóg	blister
atu(l)	dull, not sharp
átúd	full
avəb	coldness, cold
avié	red, bright orange, yellow, pink
avín	black, blue, green dark brown
avóé	coolness, cool
avó(l)	fast, quick; sharp
avɔ́ŋ	fat, grease
avu	foam
awol(a)	hour
awóom, awúɔm	ten
mǝwóom (mə́)bɛ̄	twenty
awúɔm(ɔ)	tenth
awós, iwowos	rough
awú	death, funeral
bidí bí áwú	memorial feast 9 months after death
awuda	back luck
awúɔm	(see awóom.)
áyá	how
ayab	length, long

áyad	over against, on the other side
ayé	difficulty, hard
ayi, ee	want to; will
ayi, ee, ai	with, and
áyób	over, above, up(ward) (Cf. yób.)
ayóŋ	heat; hot
ayɔ́ŋ	tribe, people
ázaŋ	in the middle
azóé	poverty; poor
ázoŋ	very red
ázud	behind, after

-B-

ba	dismember, cut/carve up, tear limb from limb
baae	lay/fold together, pack
baán	(See maán)
báb	reheat
bábola	reheat intensely
babi	nearness, vicinity; near, close by
bad	do/be again, repeat
bae	hack, chop
bae	stick/paste up
ba(l)	scrape off the grass around a house; weed a garden
bál(ə́)ba	bend (over) (intrans.)
bám	scold
bam	have (something) done

bɑ́man	put together, pile up
bɑm(ə)dɑn	wedge, jam
bɑ́n	(s)he and someone else
bɑ́n	pin to/on
bɑn	(see bɑn and mɑɑ́n)
bɑ́ndɑ	invite
bénde	recommend
bɛ́	sow, grow
bɛ́	be ready
bɛ	two
bɛ	cultivate
bɛ́d	climb
bɛdəbə	climb up on and stand on (something)
-bɛɛ́n, -mɛɛ́n	self
bɛn	refuse
bə́	of
bə́b	be bad/uncomely
bəbe	see, observe, look at, view
bə́də, bɛ́de	lift/raise up
bədə	lay (something) on top of (something)
bədí	sit on top of (something) (cf. bɛdəbə)
bədi	set (something) on top of (something)
bəə́bɔ, biíbɛ	toad
bəə́ə	second
bə́g	a piece (broken off)
bə́gɔ	break off (a piece), be broken off

bəgə	load; put on clothes
bəgi	carry; wear clothes (Cf. bəgə.)
bələ	have, own, possess
bəm	last, remain, want; do/be a long time, keep on/continue doing/being
bəmə	be spread out heavily x
bətí	the Ewondo
maán bə̄tí	an Ewondo
bəvɔg	(See foɑg.)
bəzimbi	army, soldiers , police
maán bəzimbi	soldier , policeman
bi	seize, catch, grip, hold, keep (Cf. ibi-bod.)
bíáli	be born; grow
bidí	food
bidzɑbí	joking, teasing
bidzo	reproaches, remonstrances, criticism
bié	bear children
bie	follow
biíbɛ, bəə́bɛ	toad
bilɑ́m	rum
bilɛ́d	bread (Cf. ḿbɑ̄ŋə́lɑ.)
bilíg, briíg	brick
bím	swell (up)
bimɔ	gabbing, extended conversation
bindi	settle, allow to settle
bitɑ́	war

bivie	arrogance, audaciousness
bivoe	game
bıyíyɛm	a dream
bizuúgɑ	pardon, forgiveness
bo	(See bɔ.)
bóɑd	wear/put on clothes
bóɑ́di	dress, put clothes on someone
bóɑ́n, bɔ́n	(See móɑ́n.)
bod	person, human being, man
bóe	lay (something) down
bóe	break up, break to pieces
bóle	shatter, break into pieces (intrans.) (Cf. bóe.)
bom	beat/play a musical instrument
bómbo	lie down, get into a prone position
bombo	wasp
bomolo	hammer (verb)
bóo	be lying down
bɔ, bo	do, make ; happen, become
bɔ́ŋgɔ́	(See mɔ́ŋgɔ́.)
búdi	cover
búdubu	lie on the stomach
-bɔ́g	a certain
mod m̀bɔg	a certain man
bɔ́g	turn, rotate; twist, weave, plait
búg	break (in two) (trans.)
búgi	be broken

bulu	increase, multiply; do/be more, increase doing/being
bulúm	blue
bum	roast, bake (in ashes)
búóŋ	straight
byɑ́m	how many; some, several (pl. mɑ́m)

- D -

dɑ́	one; only
dɑ́, də́dɑ́	same; likewise, the same; but, however
dɑɑ	(See dɛɛ.)
dɑ́ɑg	charcoal
dɑ́m	my
dɑ́ɑ́n	your (pl.)
dɑ́n	our
dɑŋ	cross(over), pass, surpass, exceed, go beyond; be/do more than (e.g. be bigger than)
dɛɛ, dɑɑ	ferry (someone/something) across a river
dɛ́n	soon
də́dɑ́	the same, likewise, similarly (See dɑ́.)
dí	eat
dib	close, cover, seal
dib	hit/beat with stick or other instrument
díbi	darkness; dark
dig	burn
digi	burn (a small amount)

dii	close (trans.)
dií, dibi	be closed
dím	extinguish, put out
díməzan	disappear gradually
dími	make a mistake, be in error
diŋ	love, like; love/like to do/be
diŋan	love each other
diŋəban	be loved
díŋan	wrap (up)
dís	eye (pl. mís)
dís fon	ear of corn
dóáb	navel
doál	nape of neck
dóe	your (sg.)
doe	palm
dɔ́bɔ́dɔ	doctor, doctor's office, hospital, clinic
dú	crying, weeping
du	dip, immerse, plunge, sink, soak
mədu(a) mə́ mboŋ	diced manioc soaked in water to remove the poison
duban	be plunged/dipped/soaked/immersed/baptized
dúg	be dying
dug	lie, deceive, cheat
dúgan	go back, return; do/be again/over
dulu	trip, journey
dúm	cotton
dum	crack, pop

dúmá	fame
dumbá	nest
duŋ	make noise

- DZ -

dzad	basket
dzae	ask permission
dza(1)	village, farm, home(stead), compound
dzála	fill
dzáli	be filled
dzam	thing, matter, event, occasion, reason, cause
dzam dá	but later
dzaám bɔ	maybe, perhaps, about, some, approximately
dzaŋ	disappear, be/become lost
dzaŋ	mother's village
dzə́, dzé	what, why (interrogative particle)
dzə	(Same as dza(1).)
dzəb	sharpen, file
dzəb	bury
dzəm	dance, perform a dance, celebrate
dzə́man	be less than a specific sum (e.g. 3 is less than 5.)
dzə́ŋ	search/look for
dziá	song
dzíbi	endure, bear
dzíé	fingernail, toenail, claw

dzii	stick, stab, prick, pierce
dzob	(See ǹló.)
dzóe	nose; name
dzóé bətí	family name
dzoge	leave/let alone/in peace, give up, quit, abandon
dzogo	place/put/lay down
dzom	thing; reason
dzɔ́	it
dzɔ́	say
dzɔ́b	make a slip of the tongue
dzɔ́g	swim
dzuɑ́g	a setting of eggs, brood, covey

- E -

é	the (definite article)
éé	well!
ee, ɑyi, ɑi	with, and (ee is shortened to e in fast speech)
été	if not
Etón	Eton dialect of Ewondo-Bulu cluster, Eton people
Ewondo	Ewondo language/people
mɑɑ́n Ewondo	a member of the Ewondo tribe
eyə	(See yə.)
eyi	(See yə.)

- F -

fá	grow (of plants)
fa	machete, bushknife
fáag	a comb
fád	pluck, break off
fada	priest, father
fae	grow
fag	dig; excavate
fá(l)	branch (of tree) arm/fork (of river)
fálág	back yard, area behind a house
fám	man, male
fam	do/be almost/nearly, almost succeed in doing
-fé	which, what (kind of)
félézídén, presidén	president
fen	plait/braid hair
fɛ́	bush, forest, uncultivated land
fɛd	close, shut
fɛɛ́lfɛs	flash of lightning
-fə́	other, another
fədə	be closed (Cf. fɛd.)
fə́(g)	also, too ; anymore
fəg	intelligence, wisdom
fəlafán	frying pan
fía	pear
fíáŋan	do/be in spite of
fíba	fever
fidi	gun powder

fidig	cinders, coal ashes
fíla	pillow
filansé	French
fími	wipe (off)
fó	field mouse
fó	open foot sore
fóá, fɔ́ɔ́	very
fóág, fɔ́g	one; another
foé	news
fóm	pump
fón	corn, maize
fónda	cask, barrel
-fɔ́g	one (country form), a certain (refers to animals and things)
fɔ́ɔ́	very; true, really
fúb	be(come) clean
fúbu	(make) clean
fulan	resemble
fudi	put (in)
fuláwa	flower
fúlú	character, habit
fulús	police
maán	a policeman
fum	(be) light-colored/white
fumi	pull out by the roots
fu(ú)fulu	in common, together

- H -

Any word beginning with "h" may also begin with "v". Listed here are a few words commonly written with "h".

há	here
haa	(See vaa.)
hála	then, at that time; before
hámaŋ	(See vamaŋ.)
han	choose, select, pick
háŋ	want very much; do deliberately because one wants to
hə	give (See yə.)
hə	only (See və.)

- I -

ibaáŋ	clod, mud brick
ibab	traditional leather belt
ibag	hoe
iba(l)	weed(s), grass
ibán	deposit; hostage
ibánŋa	a pin
ibé	pit, hole
ibɛ	bamboo stalk
ibə́bás	shoulder blade, collarbone
ibədɔnló	headpad for carrying
ibigan	wild
ibobɔlɔ	manioc tuber
ibóbɔ́ŋ	knuckle, joint

ibi-bod	police roundup/raid, control point/ roadblock at which personal identity papers and vehicle titles are checked; formerly, corvée labor for porter service
ibom	stick, cudgel
ibóŋ	bedroom, sleeping place
iboóbuɔ	doing, things with no goal/purpose
ibɔ́gɔ́s	hoof
ibu	nine
ibúɑ	dew
ibúdgɑ	lid, cover
ibulúu	ninth
ibumɑ́	fruit
idɑŋ	body louse
idə́gə́lə́	punishment, bother, vexation
idibigɑ	key
idíŋ	love
idɔ́g	depth, deep
idu	house mouse
idúg	toilet
idzo	member/part of the body
ifɑ́ɛ	gift, present
ifɑs	piece, lengthwise slice (Cf. itun.)
ifeés	splinter, sliver, chip
ifɛl	cicatrix
ifədəgə	buckle
ifím(ə)ŋɑ	dishcloth, rag for wiping
ifím(ə)ŋɑ ɑ́ɲu	table napkin

ifuŋgá	raft
ifus	small piece
ífus íyé	pagne, wrap-around skirt
ihə́li	bright red/yellow
ikabəlí	horse
ikag	curse
ikali	sleeping mat
ikání	small piece, splinter, chip
ikaŋga	bridge, log across a stream or gully
ikɛl	abscess
ikəə́kəə	wandering around with no goal/ purpose
ikəg	molar
ikə́g(ə́)bə	stammer, stutter
ikəkə́	go without returning
ifiŋgá	blanket
iki	prohibition, abstention
ikíb	team
ikie	iron
ikíígá	call(ing) out from a distance
ikoá	paste, ground-up material
ikoá owondo	peanut butter
ikóan	reunion
ikoan	plantain
bikoan mə́wú	memorial feast 9 days after d[illegible]th and funeral
ikob	skin; bark, peeling
ikódo	yam

ikɔb	hook
ikolog	peel(ing), rind, skin
íkōmbɑ́, ikombɑ́ miníŋgɑ́	first wife, chief wife
ikpə́mbe, ikpɛ́mbe	corrigated iron, roofing tile
ikúdɑ	fist
ikúd(ə́)bɔ́ŋ	elbow
ikudí	snare (for small animals)
ikudí	empty, unoccupied, uncared for
ikudə́ ndɑ́	abandoned house
bikudə sí	abandoned land; the heir's dance, traditional dance in which women jump up and then beat the ground with their feet as they come back down
ikum	stump
ilé	tree, wood; wooden
ilɛ́	a glass
ilíŋ	abandoned house/farm/village
ilúm	fork
ímɛ̃n	self
imgbə́m	lion
imvúvɑ́m	great-grandparent
inɑ́m	arm
inoŋ	bed
iɲəm	match (to light)
inənɑg	wet, soaked, soggy
iŋgə́ŋgə́n	bright, clear; daylight
iŋgóŋgɔ́	compassion, pity, sympathy
iɲiŋ	life

iɲóˀɔ́ŋ	mosquito
iɲɔ́lə	this (one)
iɲɔ́lɔ	that (one)
iɲɔ́lɔɑ	bladder
isɑm	hut
isáni, isánɑ	war dance, funeral dance
isəə́g	broken case/package
isə́g	liver
ísĪá	father, his father
isíé	work, job
isie	roof mat
isigɑ	firebrand, piece of burning wood
isíl	hair
isilɑ	ring, circle
isíŋgɑ	cat
ísōá	your father
isoɑ(g)	council, committee; secret/ confidential discussion
isoɑ(g) áwú	funeral committee that supervizes a funeral considering the wishes of the deceased, determines the heir, and disposes of the deceased's possessions.
isóg	afterbirth
isom	cinders, dross
isoŋ	elephant grass
isoˀog	idle talk, prattle, muttering
itáliɛn	talisman, charm
itám	alone, single
ịtɑm	source

itaŋan	bridge, stairs, shelf bracket
ítéde	in, inside, within
itétana	large round fishnet
itíé	standing room
itíéga	bottle/can opener, corkscrew
itíetíé	suddenly
itiləga	pen, pencil
itínI	twenty
(also məwóm bɛ́)	
itoá	chair
iton	palmkernel
itu(l)	shoulder
itun	piece, crosswise slice; short, little
(cf. ifas.)	
itutún	very small
ivɛ́dman, ihɛ́dman	headman, chief
ivɛs	bone
ivəgələ	picture, statue, fetish, juju
ivəvɛs	light (in weight)
ivín	tree bark used for walls of huts
ndá bivín	hut with bark walls
ivíndi	African, black person, black thing
ivó	still, quiet
ivóe	empty
ivóvoe	cool, shade
ivúɔŋ, ivooga	broom
ivúndu	wind

ivúvúmán	relative
iwábɔ	bathroom
iwɑs	brush (noun)
iwolo	ripe; active, brisk
iwoŋgɑ	wrist
iwɑwos, ɑwós	rough
iwɔ́man	clothes, washing
iwɔs	a brush
iyá	lip
iyé	cloth
iyé tēbəle	tablecloth
iyɛ́d	(see iyɛ́n)
iyɛ́m	domestic animal
iyɛ́m(ə́)lə	habit
iyɛ́n, iyɛ́d	mirror
iyəə́ə	how then?
iyə́gɑn	unusual, extraordinary, excessive
iyəgəs	chin
iyəŋ	palm fronds
iyɔŋ	time, occasion; if, when
iyɔŋ ziŋ	sometime, perhaps
iyɔŋ	comrade, companion
ízāá, ízēé	foreign, someone else's
(ízāɑ at slow speed)	
izəzəŋ	sweetness, sweet
izímbí	box, case
izímbí mbim	coffin, casket

-K-

ká	only
ká	(See sí....ka.)
ká, kε	pangolin, anteater
káb	termites
káb	catch fire, start burning
kab	divide/share out, give
kaban	divide among/share with one another
kábad	goat, sheep
kábəga	blink (eyes)
kábínda	cabinetmaker, carpenter
kád	stop, cease, end
kád	something difficult or impossible
kad	tell, relate, say
kad	do/be habitually/usually/regularly
kádá	crabb
kádə	bus
kadəsína	kerosene
ká(g)	grip, hold tight, clamp
kágədan	be tight/cramped
kála	protect, guard
ka(l)	sister of a male
kálada	book, paper
kalan	reach, pass, hand (over) offer, give (up); interpret, translate
kám	wonder, be surprised (at)

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kaman	protect, defend
kámə̄ná	perhaps
kandá	strap, thong, European leather belt
kán(dan)	break off from another person, part company with, go one's separate way, take leave of
kaŋ	praise, commend
kás	keg
kɛ́, ká	pangolin, anteater
kɛ	help, assist
kɛ́ɛ	start, begin
kə	go, leave, depart; go/leave (in order to) do/be
kədan	aim (at)
kə́g	big stick, club
kəká́a	cocoa
kələ	hang, be hanging
kəŋ	shave
kə́ŋə̄ná, kə́ŋ̄ná	crosswise, across
ki	abstain/refrain from, fast
ki	(See ki(g).)
kídí	morning
kíkídígi	in the mornings
kíé	leaf
kiəgə	taste, test, try
ki(g)	not
kíi	pass by

kíla	kilo
kilan	go around, bypass, circle (around)
ki(l)	forbid, prohibit, taboo, establish a taboo (cf. ki.)
kíli	be greatly vexed/annoyed
kili	forbid, prohibit (cf. ki.)
kíndíg, kíníŋ	bank, shore
kíŋ	voice
kísiŋ	kitchen
koá	no
kókoá	absolutely not
kóad	bend, make crooked; turn, take/make a turn
kóádan	go around, bypass, circle
kóádan	enlist, enroll, sign on
koag	rub, crush, pulverize; iron (clothes)
kóali	come/get loose/free
koali	engage, set in motion, get under way
kóám, kɔ́m	a long time, always, from now on, eternally
kóan	collect, assemble, gather
koan	be sick, be injured
kóbə	pull/take off covering
kóé	monkey
kóe	cough
koe	light, set on fire, turn on electric light
kogəlan	pray, beg, ask
kogolo	add, augment; have labor pains

kole	lend
kolós	cross
kom	make, build, construct, repair, improve, create
koməzɑn	prepare, get oneself ready (cf. kom.)
kón	beans
kón	spirit, return of a dead person
kondo, kondó	decoration
kóŋ	a kind of magic that makes one die before one's time
koókombo	hawk
kósĪ	rat
kɔ́b	meet, find, join
kɔ́bɔ	speak, talk
kɔ́d	be(come)/get dry
kɔm	always, from now on, eternal(ly)
kɔɔ́zɔ	(buck)shot
kɔs	a fish
kú	(See kúí.)
ku	fall
kuɑn	sell, be sold (cf. kus.)
kúb	chicken
kúb	pour (out/into)
kúbɑn	be poured
kúgu, kúu	a cook
kúí, kúú	go/come/get out, arrive, meet
kúli	release, let go, open, undo

kukóɑ́	ghost, phantom, spectre
(kú)koɑ́	absolutely not
kú(l)	turtle
kúli	release, let out, let go, reveal, disclose
kúm	kingdom; rich
kus, ku	buy
kún	do/be early

-KP-

kpɑ	greedy
kpɑɛ	cut away the overhanging undergrowth/underbrush with a machete.
kpɑ́mɑ	pliers, pincers
kpɑ́ŋ	starling
kpɛ	knock down, make fall, cut down
kpa	throw/cast down
kpə	organize/manage a religious festival
(kpə)kpɛ́	sour
kpələ	tatoo, engrave
kpəm	manioc leaves

-L-

lá	fetch water
lɑ́	three
lɑ́b	dive, plunge, dip

lában	be plunged/dipped
lad	sew
lála	third
lámba	(See alámba.)
láŋ	count , read
laŋan	remain/stay a long time, tarry, linger
lɛ́	draw water
lɛ́de, lə́də	show, indicate, lead, guide
lə́də	(See lɛ́de.)
lí	clear away underbrush
líg	leave (behind), abandon
lígi	remain, stay behind
lígi ee	keep, retain
liŋan	be angry
lób	bite
lod	go/pass by
lodo	make, go/pass by
lóe	call
lóg	dip/bail out
lógozo	dip/bail out on all sides/all around
lóm	send
lóŋ	build, plait, weave, twist
lɔb	fish with a line
lɔ́ŋ	crow, blow, blow a musical instrument
lugu	honor, praise, celebrate

lúi	bring down, lower, bend down/over
lui	languish
lúm	stick, prick
lúmi	be stuck/pricked
lúman	fight
lúmbu	bend over, bow, lean over (intrans.) (Cf. lúi.)
lúu	sin
lúu	be sloped/inclined

-M-

m̩, mḿ	yes
ma, mə	I, me
maáǹ	take leave of
maán , man	little/young/member of a group; sufficient/enough to (pl. baán.)
maán bə̄tí	an Ewondo
maán-fám	boy
man ǹnom	old enough
maánə̄ŋ	sibling, cousin, member of same clan
maánná	sibling of same mother
maátādá	sibling of same father
makíd	market
mal	canoe
mám	(See byám.)
man	small, little (cf. maán.)
man	finish, complete
máŋ	sea, coast

mbɑ́	do/be always/continually
mbɑ́dɑ	run fast, be afraid
mbɑ̀dmɛ̀ɲè	smallpox
m̀bɑmɑ	many, several
m̀bɑ́n	diligence, industry, diligent, industrious
m̀bɑ́ndɑ́	news
mbɑ́ŋ	kidney; seed, kernel
m̀bɑ̀ŋ—	ivory
ḿbɑ̄ŋə́lɑ	bread; fufu
m̀bɑ́s	drumplaying
m̀bé	which one
m̀be	evil person
m̀bɛ́	door
m̀bɛ	butcher
m̀bɛ́-sí	porch, veranda; front yard
mbəg	fall, slip, slide (noun)
mbəg	trough, crib, manger
m̀bəgə	parcel, package; carrier (person or thing that carries)
m̀bəlɑ́n	industriousness
m̀bələ́	owner, possessor
m̀bəmbə	(See m̀bəŋ.)
m̀bəŋ	goodness, good; beauty, beautiful
m̀bəmbə	good, favorable, convenient, opportune
m̀bí	cave, cavern
m̀bíɑn	lower leg, calf

m̀biáŋ	a liana belt for climbing palmtrees
m̀bíás	a twin
m̀bíbíŋ	gully, gorge, ravine, canyon
m̀bí(l)	speed; fast; race track, race course
m̀bim	corpse, dead body
m̀bó, m̀bɔ́(g)	one; side, hand
m̀bó nnōm	right side
m̀bó ŋgá	left side
m̀boad	clothing, clothes, piece of clothing
m̀bóádɔ́	wearer
m̀bóán	oil
m̀boan	(acting of) doing
m̀bóbóg	lame person; lame
m̀bódóg	soft clay, mud, mortar
m̀bóg	hole, pipe; hollow
m̀bog	prisoner
m̀bó(l)	kind, manner, way; because, since , as
m̀bóle	extraction, removal
m̀bom	(long) bundle
mbómbo	level, flat; platform
ḿbomənà́	around, round about
m̀bómó	namesake, person with same name
m̀bóŋ	ridgepole
mboŋ	cassava, manioc
m̀bɔ	doer
m̀bɔ məbálá	healer, native doctor
m̀bɔ məŋgan	sorcerer, witch

mbɔ́g	(See fɔ́g)
m̀bɔ́m	daughter-in-law
m̀bú	season, year
mbubúm	pregnant woman
m̀búlúg	dust
-mɛɛ́n	(See-bɛɛ́n.)
mɛ́s	mass
mə, mɑ	I, me
məbɑdɑ	skin disease/rash
məbɑ́lɑ́	herbs, medicine
məbúɑ	poverty
məbudɑ	sweet potatoes
məbún	pride, arrogance
məbyəg	slow, hesitating speech
mədííɡɑ	nutrition
mədugɑ́n	deceit, dishonesty, fraud
mədzɑb	shea butter oil
mədzɑ́ŋ	xylophone, marimba
məfənəŋ	space between houses
məkɑbɑ	macabo (yam type)
məki	blood
ɑki	a drop/bit of blood
məliŋ(ə)nɑ́	anger
məlɔ́	disobedience, insubordination
məlɔ́g	dew
məmúŋ	smile, grin, smirk
məndím	water

andím	a drop/bit of water
məŋgɑŋ	magic, medicine, fetish
məɲɑ́ŋ	milk
məɲú	a drink/drinks
məsiŋ	boxing, wrestling
məsis	scary, frightful, dangerous; danger, fright
mə́tɑ̆dí	beginning, start
mətɛ́	saliva; blessing, benediction
vɑɑmətɛ	wish happiness, bless
mətín	elephantiasis
mətsɔ́	earth, soil
mətúɑ	automobile
mətúnəŋɑ	offering
məvəg	brideprice
məvíni	ebony
məwɔ́bɔ	bath, bathing
məwúl	palmoil
məyə́g	rainwater
məyɔ́g	palmwine; alcoholic drink
m̀fɑ́g	side, direction
m̀fɑ̀n	crossbow
m̀fɑŋ	good, real, true, special, important
m̀fɑɑ́ŋ mod	rich/important man
m̀fé	which, what
m̀fɛn	plait
mfə́g	bag, basket

m̀fə́ŋ	border, neighborhood, environs
m̀fim	wall
m̀fiŋgɑ́	blanket
m̀fɔ́ndɔ́	shirt
m̀fúbɑ́n	clean
m̀fu(l)	uninhabited
m̀fyɑ́ŋ	soup
mgbə(l)	black magic
mfúm	white person; white thing
mílíg	canned milk
mimbog	jail, prison
mimfɛ́d	quibbling, wrangling
mimfəd	contradiction
miníŋgɑ́	woman
mínson	mission, church; Christain
minsɔs	slander
mintɑg	joy
mintíé	pain
mintsɑŋ	skin rash
miŋkə́nə	iron pot
mís	(See dís.)
móán,mɔ́n	baby (pl. bóɑ́n, bɔ́n)
m̀kpɑ́lɑ́	nonsense, absurdity; mockery
mkpɑ́mɑ́ŋ	new
mod	(See bod.)
móe	close friend, bosom friend
moɔ́m, muom	eight

mɔní	money
mɔ́ŋgɔ́	child, young person, (pl. bɔ́ŋgɔ́)
mɔ́ŋgɔ́ bisíé	houseboy
múlí	in over there
múlūú	in there
mú(ná)	in here
muɔd	(See mvɔd.)
mvaga	wedge
mvám	grandparent
mvámbá	my grandparent
mvám	shouting, screaming
mvámaŋ	(See vámaŋ.)
mván	co-wife
mve, mvie	earthen pot
mvɛ́d	harp
mvɛ(1), mvə(1)	female genitalia
Mvə́lə	Basaá language/people
Mvələ́	Mvələ́ dialect of Ewondo, Mvələ́people
mvəŋ	rain, raincloud
mvi	vertical wall posts for a house
mvid	dirt; dirty
mvie	(See mve.)
m̀viɛ	side
mvɩ́m	swelling, tumor
mvóe	friend
mvofoŋ	bee

mvóg	clan, sib; countrymen
mvɔd, muɔd	gold, brass, yellow metal
mvɔé, mvɔí	health; healthy, sound, whole; peace; peaceful, quiet, undisturbed
m̀vɔg	large reddish-brown squirrel
m̀vɔ̀m	luck
m̀vúmvɔ̄m	very lucky
mvú	dog
mvúa	last, last one
m̀vug	dumb/mute person
mvug	dumb, mute
mvulná	similarity, resemblance
mvum	flour, meal; floury, mealy
mvúmvúa	back, behind, late
mvús	a/the back
mvuvú	mainoc or corn flour (cf. mvum)
mwuomo	eighth
myá(1)	moonlight
myə́g	dam for fishing (when women fish, they dam off a section of a stream and dip the water out.)
myəŋgə́li	rust; rusty

-N-

ná(a), nə(ə)	that (subordinate clause marker)
nálá	so, like, thus
nálāá	like that
namba	touch, handle

ná(ná)	like this
naná	my mother
ndá	house
nda bod	family
ndam	width, wide
ndáman	spoil, ruin
ndamba	rubber; ball
ndami	spread (out), expand
ńdɛle	swallow
ǹdɛm	sign, trace, footprint
ndɛm	recently; have just done/been
ńdə̄	then, at that time; once, once upon a time
ndə	well, then, so (expresses surprise or wonderment)
ndəg	calabash bottle
ndə́gələ	punish; bother, vex
ndəm	slow
ndə́ŋ	be spacious/roomy/loose/too big to fit
ndəŋ	totter, shake
ǹdí	eater; heir
ǹdíí	big eater
ndí	hope
ǹdi	large root
ndib	dawn, daybreak
ndie	grandchild
ǹdil	roof
ǹdím	blindness; blind
ǹdíndím	blind person

n̄dín	stranger
ǹdiŋan	loved one, person who is loved
ǹdiŋi	lover
ndóan	fire
ndóm	brother of a female
ndómán	young man
ndómbá	fish or meat wrapped in banana leaves and baked in ashes.
ńdɔ	then, at that time
ǹdɔ́g	mango
n̄dɔ̄ŋ	story, recitation
ǹdɔŋ	road, highway
ndúgúdu	heat
ndúɔ́ŋ , ndɔ́ŋ	story, report
ndzaag	firewood
Ndzáman	Germany; German
ndzaŋgá	lottery subscription (since there have been few credit facilities, persons wanting to purchase an expensive item would pool their funds. For example, 25 people who wanted to buy a refrigerator would make regular payments into a pool. When there was enough money to buy a refrigerator, a name would be drawn and that person would get a refrigerator. All persons in the pool would keep making regular payments until all persons in the pool received a refrigerator.)
ndzi	know; not do/be
ndzíba	cucumber
ǹdzíbán	stealing; stolen
ndzóás	judge, arbiter

ǹdzóe	boss, ruler, one who gives orders
ndzoe	paramount chief
ndzoe	scissors
ndzɔ́bi	slip of the tongue
ndzug	difficulty, trouble
nɛ́n	be big/tall/important
nə(ə), ná(a)	that (subordinate clause marker)
nə	be
ǹlag	horn
ǹláŋ	history, story
ǹló	head
ǹlō ˉó yōb → ǹló-dzob	sun
ǹlod	brook, creek
ǹlómán	commission, charge, order, instruction
ǹlɔ̀	a fly
ǹlɔ́b	fishhook
ǹlɔmbi	bottle
ǹlɔŋ	savanna
ǹlúmbu	slope, incline
ǹluɔ	fly, housefly
nna	my mother
ǹnám	pap, mush, porridge
ǹnam	land, country, region; village
nnam Éwondo	Ewondoland
̀nnaŋ	albino
ǹnə́m	heart; interior

ǹnəm, ǹnɛm	heart; inside
ǹnə́ŋ	guest, visitor
ǹnəŋ	raffia
ǹnoɑni	keeper, guard; heir
ǹnóm	husband, male
ǹnóm-ŋgoɑn	son-in-law
ǹnóm ílé	a tree difficult to cut down
ǹnom	old
noɑn	stretch/straighten oneself
nɔ́ŋ	(to) rain
nɔŋ	take
ǹsɑ́mbɑ́	row, line
ǹsɑŋ	string, cord; necklace
ǹsɑŋ	teeth filed to a point
ǹsɛ́n	oblique, slanting, diagonal
ǹsə́bə́g	gutter, ditch
ǹsə́g	ivory ring
ǹsə́ləg	sand
ǹsə́mə	sinner
ǹsəŋ	court(yard), front yard; outside
ǹsəŋ ɑ́wú	payment of respects to a deceased by attending funeral; funeral
ńsia	ripe plantain
ǹsíé	worker, farmer
ǹsílí	question
ǹsíli	questioner, one who asks questions
ǹsínɑ	machine, bicycle, sewing machine

ǹsíŋ	wildcat
ǹsiŋga	rope
ǹsis	nerve, vein, muscle
ǹsísīm	soul, spirit; shadow
ǹsóád	penis
ǹsoag	slander, backbiting, vilification
ǹsóe	a type of lizard
ǹsom	a hunt
ǹsome	hunter
ǹson	meat
ǹsɔ́	naked
ǹsɔ́ŋ	worm
ǹsɔŋ	beak, bill, snout, point
ǹsu	poison
ǹsum	digging stick
ǹsúsúg	stupid person
ǹsusum	nonchalant, careless attitude
ǹtáŋ	step/rung/round of a ladder; stairs
ǹtáŋán	European, white person
ǹtaŋán	interruption, break, breaking
ǹtɛm	branch, bough
ǹtɛ́t	frail, invalid, sickly, weak
ǹtɛt	hundred
ǹtɛt	a basket wooven from palm leaves
ǹtɛ́tɔm	lukewarm
ǹtí	master, lord

ǹtíé	a stretch/span of time; as long as
ǹtíé ané	since
ǹtíg	worn thin, wearing out
ǹtimi	translator, interpreter
ntó(l)	first-born child
ǹtóm	hat
ǹtómbá	sheep
ǹtómba	distinguished/important person
ǹtsáb	dry bough/branch
ǹtsaŋ	footstep
ǹtsaŋ	itch, mange, scabies
ǹtu	old, used
ǹtuan	bamboo rafters
ǹtúd	full
ǹtu(g)	spoiled, tainted, polluted; nullify, annul, abolish, exterminate, obliterate; locked/secured/fastened up
ńtúi	diarrhea
ǹtúm	pestle
ǹwaám	bamboo for plaiting mats
ǹwú	deceased person
ǹwúán	dying, death; dead
ǹwulu	traveler, tourist
ǹwúwúb	thief
ǹzəzaám	leper

- N -

ŋga(a)	tag-question particle, e.g. isn't it?
ŋ̀gaán	crocodile
ŋgaán	praise
ŋgab	share, portion
ŋgadag	fetter, shackle
ŋ̀gá(l)	wife, female
ŋ̀gál ílé	a tree easy to cut down
ŋgá(l)	gun, rifle, cannon
ŋgalná	answer, response
ŋgam, ŋgaməná	protection
ŋgaŋ	praise
ŋgan	black magic
ŋgɛ́d	cruel, brutal
ŋgə́	if
ŋgé ki	or (Cf. ki(g).)
ŋ̀gə́lə	be still/yet
ŋgilná	round
ŋgoabi	box
ŋgọag	small, hand-held grindstone
ŋgoag	gravel
ŋgoán	millipede
ŋgoan	girl, daughter
ŋgoan	moon, month
ŋgoan	a type of pumpkin
ŋgoandɔ́, ŋ̀góándɔ́	blacksmith's hammer

ŋgob	shoe
ŋ̀gòè	bamboo torch
ŋgogé	evening
ŋgoóŋgógóle	in the evening
ŋ̀gogəlán	prayer, request
ŋgómənɑ	government
ŋgoməzan	preparation
ŋgui	(flying) bat
ŋgu(l)	strength, power; strong, powerful
ŋ̀gúma	whole, complete
ŋgun	garbage, rubbish
ŋgúni	heap/pile up; give someone too much
ŋgúnu	be heaped/piled up; have too much in stock/on hand (Cf. ŋgúni.)
ŋguúb	hippopotamus
ŋ̀ká	flint
ŋ̀ka	backbasket (of porter)
ŋ̀kab	one who divides/parcels out
ŋ̀kàbàg	flame
ŋ̀kad	conversation, discussion; report; negotiation; trial
ŋ̀kàm	birdline
ŋ̀kaná	proverb, fable
ŋ̀kándá	towel, washcloth
ŋkaŋ	root
ŋ̀kɛɛ	assistant, helper
ŋ̀kəə	walker, one who is walking/going
ŋ̀kəŋ	jaw(bone)

ŋ̀kə́kə́ŋ	intelligent/smart person
ŋ̀kə(1)	handle
ŋ̀kə́lə́gə́-fón	corncob
ŋ̀kə́ŋ	musical instrument made of 2 iron cylinders
ŋ̀kəŋ	shave, shaving; haircut, hairdo; barber, beautician
ŋ̀kí	grip, handle
ŋ̀kiɑ	parent-in-law
ŋ̀kié	lowland region/area
ŋ̀kíl	animal path, animal burrow
ŋ̀kóɑ́d	crooked, bent
ŋ̀koɑ́(1)	string, cord
ŋ̀kod	dryness, dry
ŋ̀koe	bachelor, single person
ŋ̀kokóm	sterile woman
ŋ̀ko(1)	hill mountain
ŋ̀kóm	rock
ŋ̀kóm	war prisoner (became a slave)
ŋ̀komɑ́n	something built/constructed
ŋ̀komo	builder, mechanic, cabinetmaker
ŋ̀koó	line, cord, band; telephone
ŋ̀kɔ́bɔ	speech, language
ŋ̀kɔ́g	sugarcane, sugar
ŋ̀kɔ́ŋgɔ́	frog
ŋ̀ku	salt; salty; ŋ̀ku ńtɑ́ŋɑ́n, refined salt
ŋ̀kud	sack, bag
ŋ̀kug	trunk, shaft, mainstem torso, chest, breast

ŋ̀kúkoan	sick person
ŋ̀kúkúmá	chief; wealthy person, important person
ŋ̀ku(l)	talking drum
ŋ́kulu	storm, tornado , thunder
ŋ̀kús	widow
ŋ̀kus	purchase, something bought

- N -

ɲab	tear up/open, split, burst
ɲabi	tear, split, burst (intrans.)
ɲád	buffalo
ɲag	cow
ɲaág áwú	memorial feast on the first anniversary of death
ɲáli	chew
ɲáŋ	suck
ɲé, ɲə́	he, she, it
ɲeb	be good/beautiful/right/nice
ɲɛbə	decorate, embellish
ɲí	this
ɲi, ɲian	go/walk in, enter
ɲi, ɲie	four
ɲiá	suckle, nurse, give to suck
ɲie	keep, conserve, preserve, store (up), set aside
ɲii	save/sustain life
ɲiín	when
ɲin	head louse

ɲina	fourth
ɲ̀ɲiá	mother
ɲiŋ	live, be alive
ɲiŋi	bend, fold, make crooked
ɲ̀ɲala	brother/sister-in-law
ɲ̀ɲe	border, boundary; upto, until, as soon as
ɲ̀ɲoá	mother's sister
ɲ̀ɲúu	drinker, one who drinks too much
ɲoá	your mother
ɲó(1), ɲɔ́(1)	body
ɲɔ́	snake
ɲɔ́lɔ, ɲɔlə, ɲɛ[illegible]	that
ɲɔ́ŋ	float, glide/move along water
ɲɔŋ	rain ; fall from sky in small pieces
ɲú	drink
ɲúu	make/cause/give to drink
ɲui	orphan
ɲumén	raw, green, not ripe
ɲumulu	smell, sniff
ɲ̀ya, ɲ̀yɛ, ɲ̀yia	intestine
ɲ̀yámán	cooking, cooked
ɲ̀yɛ	(See ɲ̀ya.)
ɲ̀yɛ́bə, ɲ̀yəbə	faith, religion, belief
ɲ̀yə́gə	learner, student
ɲ̀yə́gələ	teacher
ɲ̀yia	(See ɲ̀ya.)
ɲ̀yídan	beating

ɲ̀yiɛ	singer

- O -

obə́be	small pot
obəbə́g	enough, sufficient
obəə́m	francolin, bush partridge
obəə́ŋ	dove
obəŋ	pidgeon
obúd	roof mat, tiles
obud	a short grass (used for pasture)
ódén	when
odzɑm	a small squirrel
ódzɑ̄n	day before yesterday; day after tomorrow
odzóé	dwarf antilope
odzoe	banana
owé, oé	yes
ofumbí	orange, lemon
ofumbí bə̄tí	lemon
okɑ́g	avarice
okɑlɑ	contemporary, of the same age
okɛ́ndé	fingerring
okɛ́ndɛ́	lamb
okəkɑ́mbɑ́	bed made of plaited bamboo
okəŋ	knife
okídí	tomorrow
okíé	banana leaf
ókɔ̄ɑ́	formerly, once

okoan	disease, illness
okóbá	earlier times, former times, in the past, long ago
okpaál	partridge
okpəŋ	a small antilope
olad	sewing, stitching
olám	trap for small animals
olélé, olelé	bush, shrub
olɛ́s	rice
oloŋ	ladder
olɔm	onion
olún	anger
oluɔ, olɔ	slave
omomód	giant, ogre
ondundoa	needle; syringe
óndúndúo	pepper
onoán	bird
oŋgogé	yesterday
oŋgóla	fence; town, downtown, Yaoundé; formerly, German government administrative station
óŋgōŋgo	improvement after an illness
man óŋgōŋgó	slight improvement
oɲu	finger, toe
osámá	humilation
osóan	shame
osóé	river
á ósōé ákōé	upstream
á ósōé ŋ́kīá	downstream

osú	front; first
ósū	in front of
osún	gadfly, stinging fly
osúson	ant
osúsúa	first, before(hand), previously
otítie	star
ótom	motorbike
otsída	smoke
otú	resin, rosin
otúb	awl, punch, tool for making string holes in a roofmat
ovón	axe, hatchet
oé, owé	yes
owondo	peanut, groundnut
ayab	distance; far
ayɛ́m	tongue
ayɔ́	sleep

- S -

sa	split, cut open; operate (medical)
sa	capture/carry off (booty)
sal	split, slit, slash
sali	split, slit (intrans.)
sáma	decline, refuse, reject; be declined/refused/rejected
saman	six
samɛn, sam(ə)na	sixth
samoza	shake (off/out)

saŋ	cut up, cut into small pieces
sáŋan	become impatient, lose patience
saŋ	(be) sour/spoiled
sɛ́di	cut, make a cut in, cut a piece out of
sɛ́m	sin
-sə	all, each, every
sə	tag question (e.g. isn't it?)
səə ə́	(See si(g).)
sí	ground, earth, floor
sí	(See si(g).)
sí....ka	such and such a, what/which/whoever
sí mod ka	such and such a person, whoever
síé	(to) work
síé	clean, polish
sig	saw (off/in two); rub
si(g)	be not (səə ə́ = sigí hə not only)
sigan	startle, make (someone) jump; be startled/made to jump
sígibi	lean oneself against (something)
sigi	go/come down, descend
sígi	lean something against, press (against) (something)
sígi	be leaning against, press (against) (something) (Cf. sígibi and sígi.)
sígsa	house with rooms/sleeping places for several people/wives; apartment house; dormitory
síi	wipe off

síi	annoint
sii	alarm, startle
sikúlu	school
síli	ask
siŋ	hate (verb)
sob	leave, depart, return, go back
sɔ́	come/arrive here
sə	if, when; marker of rhetorical questions (səə́ fé, then)
só	blackblacked tufted antilope (Cephalophus dorsalis castaneus)
só	rites of passage for males 20-22 years old, Só or Antilope Rites
sóɑ	have just done
soɑg	discuss (someone); slander, malign
sóɑ́li	thread, string (verb)
soɑli	hide, conceal
sóɑ́ndɔ́	sharpen to a point
sob	wash
sob	go away/back
só	(See zu.)
soe	let go, send away, pour out
sog	make noise
sogozo	make noise all around
soge	skin, remove skin
sono	be squatting/crouched down
sɔ́	come
sɔ́bɔ	soap

sɔbɔ	be in hiding, hide oneself
sɔg	discuss (someone)
sɔ́m	fatigue, tired
wɔ́g sɔ́m	feel/be tired
sɔm	find
sɔ́man	accuse
sɔmi	inhale
sɔman	inhale snuff
sɔ́ndɔ	Sunday; week
sɔŋ	grave
sɔ́ŋgɔ́	father's sister
sɔ́ɔ	come (out), arrive
sɔ́ɔ ee	bring
su	take down, unhang, remove from
suan	occur, arise, appear, arrive, be present (Cf. sus.)
súb	go/become empty
súbu	approach, go/come near
súg	support, hold up, prop/shore up
sug	shake (off/out), greet, shake hands
suguzu	shake several times, toss, rinse
súli	untie knots; run out, expire, end
súlug	soldier ant
sum	plant
suman	be planted
suŋ	argue, disagree, dispute
sus	climb down, descend

- T -

taa	tobacco
tád	mention, refer to
tadá	my father
tád(i)	start, begin doing/being
tag	be glad/happy/pleased
tála	be awake/alert
tám	wish
tám	do/be first/previously/beforehand
támbá	feather
tán	five
tan	fishnet
tána	fifth
táŋ	number
táŋ(ə́)yá	how many
taŋan	span/bridge a river/chasm
-te, -teé	that
tébəle	table
tɛ	extend, stretch; insult
tɛ́la	tailor
tɛ́le , tə́le	stand/get up ; appoint, choose,elect
tə́	indeed, sure, really
tə , təgə	not, without
tə.....tə	either....or
tə́bə	stand up and sit back down or walk away, stop/drop by (Cf. tɛ́le.)
təg	be tender/soft; chew
təgə	make soft/tender, soften
təgə	manage, control, administer, govern

təgə	(See. tə.)
tələ	stand up and remain standing (Cf. tɛ́le.)
tə́tələ́, tə́tə̄lə́	straight, upright; direct
tidάg	truck
tíe	pull out/away
tíe	set sail, weigh anchor
tii	release, let loose
tií	be tied/bound up; follow; be hanged
ti(l)	write
tımi	explain in detail
tíndi	push
tindi	tie (up/together)
tínte	ink
toά́	be sitting/living/dwelling, be (located) (Cf. tɔbɔ.)
tóαn	do properly/carefully/well
tóé	truth
toe	set, stand, place, put
tóg	spoon
tóyα	tax(es)
tɔ, tuɔ	same
tɔ́b	choose, select
tɔbɔ	set oneself down, make one's dwelling at, make/keep oneself in some condition, e.g. still
tɔ́g	be little/small
tɔl(ə)sís	trousers
túb	bore/punch/make a hole

túb	run away, escape
túé	truth, true
túé	breast, chest
tue	place, put
túg	cheat, defraud, best, take in, impose upon
tum	burn a large amount, burn off a field
tuni	skin, peel, remove skin/peeling
tuɔ, tɔ	same

-TS-

tsá(g)	go/come after, follow; gather firewood
tsag	stamp, pound, mash
tsáli	spit
tsén	chain
tsɛ́ndé	change, exchange
tsətsad	a small amount, a little
tsíd	animal, mammal; meat
tsídan	follow, chase, run after
tsíg	cut off/up
tsígi	be cut off/up
tsitsad	few, little (in quantity)
tsog	think, consider,reflect
tsɔ́s	church

-V-

vá	here

vɑɑ	take away, deprive, strip, pick/lift up, remove
vɑɑ mətɛ	wish hapiness, bless
vɑe	remove, take away, lift off
vɑ́lɑ̄ɑ́	there
vɑ́lɑ̄ɑ́	rightnow
vɑ́lí	over there, yonder
vɑ́mɑŋ, mvɑ́mɑŋ, hɑ́mɑŋ	hammer
vɑ́nɑ́	here
vɑ́ŋ	desire, want, require, need, plan, project, consider; do/be intentionally/ on purpose
vé, və́	where (interrogative particle)
və́	give
və́	(See vé.)
və	be alive/awake; live, exist
və	only
v(ə) ɑnə́	like this, so
vəbə	wake up; breathe
vəə́	be awake, be alive (Cf. vəbə.)
vəg	pay brideprice
vəg	measure; think, believe, suppose
vəgɑn	confront, tackle, pit oneself against; compare, be equal to
veŋɑn	turn over
viɑn	sunshine
viɑŋ	chevrotain
viɛ́	mushroom
viəg	clay; earthen

víni	detest, despise
vóáli	aid, help
vóan	forget
vóé	sweep
voe	play
vólo	hurry, hasten, make haste; do fast/ quickly
vóm	place
vuvú	couscous, monioc flour, corn flour

-W-

wá, wɔ́	hand
wa	you (sg.)
wa, wɔ	chimpanzee
wábɔ, wɔ́bɔ	bathe
wándi	rake
was	comb, brush (verb)
wé	honey
wé	there
woa	throw, shoot
wóé	kill
woe	laugh
wóg	hear, feel, perceive
wógo	bind/pack/wrap up
wom	shell, husk (verb)
wóman	argue, quarrel
wome	shed/flake off skin

wɔ́, wá	hand
wɔ, wa	chimpanzee
wɔ́bɔ, wábɔ	bathe
wɔ́d	whites (clothing made from a heavy white cloth.)
wɔŋ	fear
wɔ́s	watch
wɔs	scrape, rake, brush
wú	die
wua	throw away
wúb	theft
wúban	greet, embrace
wúdan	shrink
wulu	walk, go
wúm	bear fruit (plant); be famous (person)
wúndi	window

-Y-

yá	how
ya	spread, open/roll out
yáan	take leave of; say goodby; honor, pay respect(s)
yáe, yée	be open
yab	be long
yaba	lengthen
yaɛ	scratch
yám	cook
yaman	expand, spread (out)

yɑŋ	fry
yɑŋgɑ	wait
yeɑn	happen, come to pass
yée	(See yɑ́e.)
yélə	fly away/off; jump over
yém	tie (up)
yémə	be tied (up) (Cf. yém.)
yɛ́m	know
yɛm	a dream
yɛ́m(ə́)lə	be used to/accustomed to
yɛ́n	see
kə yɛ́n	visit, go see
yə	then, thus, so
yə, yi (iyə, iyi = yə, yi)	question-marking particle
yə́gɑn	not know, not understand
yə́gə	learn, imitate; learn to do/be
yə́gəbə	lean on/against
yə́gələ	teach
yəgələ	beseech, implore, entreat
yə́mə	be gripped/held tight
yi	want (to), request, desire
yi	cry, weep
yi	(See yə.)
yíd	beat, hit
yídɑn	fight with/against

yoaɣ	curse
yiɛn	necessary, appropriate, proper; appropriate to do/be
yo	lend
yób	sky, heaven; up
yolo	name, give a name
yón	cry, weep
yóo	be/stand open (Cf. yáɛ)
yóŋ	(be) hot
yɔɔ́m	Sanaga River

-Z-

zá	who, which
zaám	leprosy
zám	goodtasting
zam	raffia palm
Zambá	God
zamgba	seven
zamgbála	seventh
zaŋ	middle; ee zaŋ, at midnight
zɛn	path
zə	beard
zəə́	leopard
zəə́yaŋ	lightning
zəŋ	pineapple
zie	hunger
mawo(go) zie	I am hungry

zig	saw, grater
ziŋ	hate, hatred
-ziŋ	some(thing), some(one)
zoɑg	elephant
zoe	civet
zu	come/arrive there; come to do/be
zud	bottom, rump, body from waist down, genitalia
zuli	terminal/due date
zuŋɑ	argument, disagreement

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